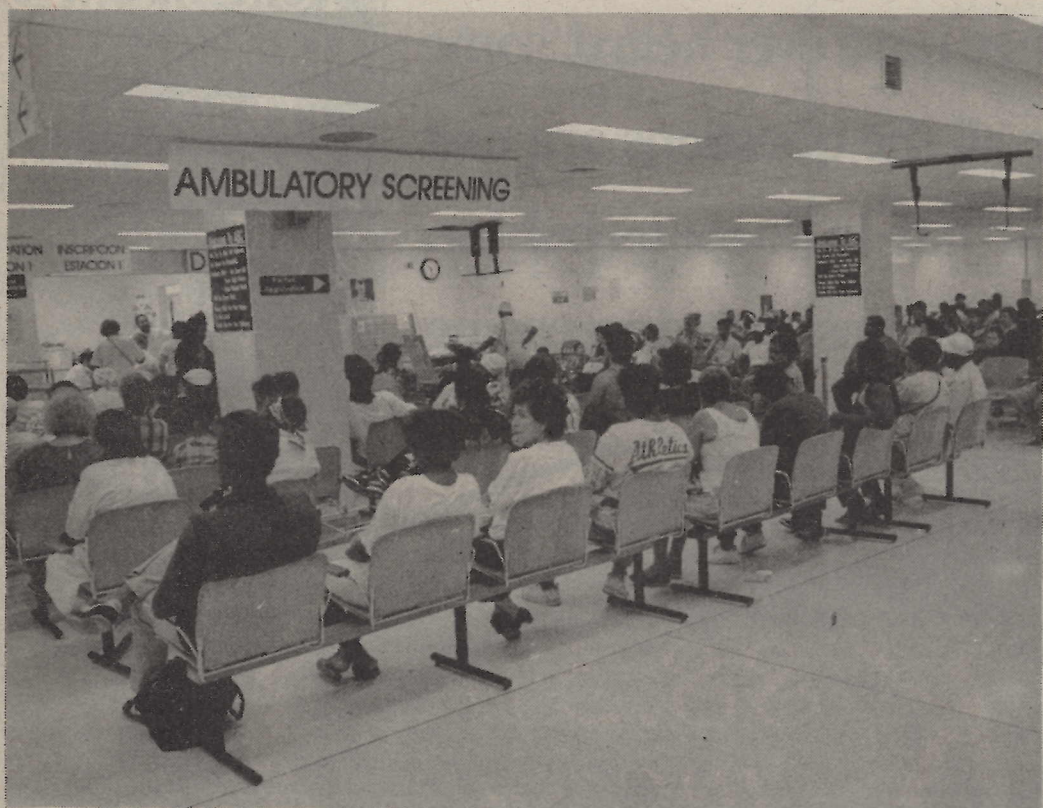
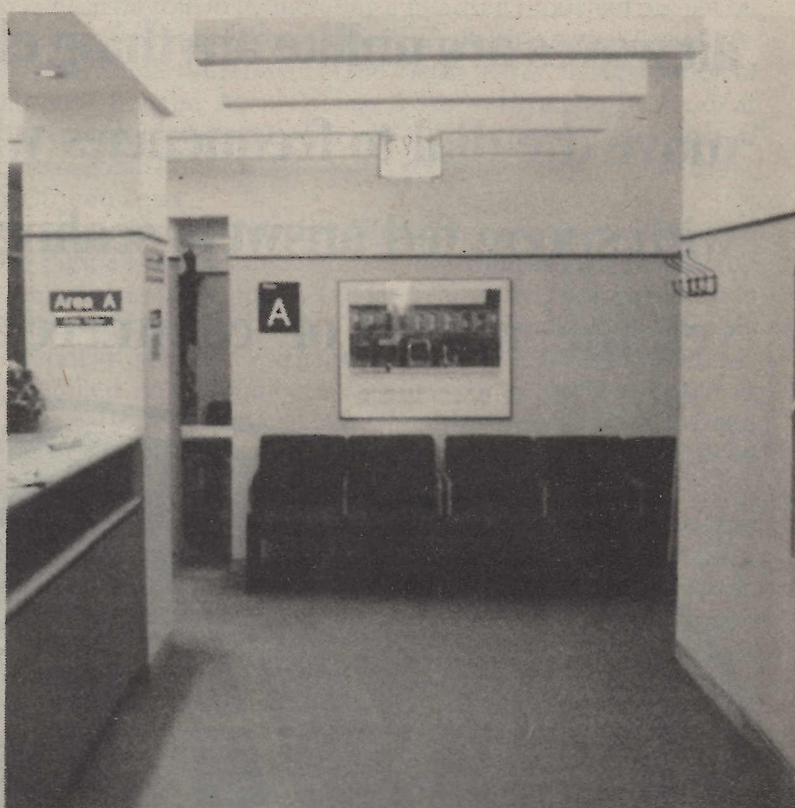


GREY CITY JOURNAL

October 1, 1993 • Student Weekly at the University of Chicago



Uninsured and Medicaid patients wait for treatment at Cook County Hospital's free Fantus Clinic.



MATT ROTH

Uninsured and Medicaid patients wait for treatment at the University of Chicago Hospitals.

TRIAGE

Who gets in and who's left out at the U. of C. Hospitals

by J. W. Mason

In February of 1990 a little girl named Lenise Nelson got her fifteen minutes of fame when her parents discovered that she had stopped breathing and called for an ambulance. The Nelsons live only a few blocks from the University of Chicago, and they assumed that the ambulance would take Lenise to the University's Wyler Children's Hospital, probably the best children's hospital in the city. But when the paramedics radioed to Wyler they discovered that the hospital was on bypass. Lenise had been born at Wyler, but there was no room for her there now; the intensive care unit was full. Instead, the ambulance was sent to St. Bernard's Hospital at 61st and Dan Ryan, which lacks a pediatric intensive care unit. Doctors at St. Bernard put her on a respirator, but by the time Lenise finally reached Cook County Hospital's pediatric ICU four hours later, she was brain-dead.

Lenise's death produced a flurry of newspaper articles and a brief storm of public outrage, but sorting out the issues involved and allocating blame is almost impossible. The executive director of Operation PUSH, the national civil rights group, called for an investigation, suggesting that

the decision to divert the ambulance was related to the fact that the Nelsons had no medical insurance except Medicaid. The director of Wyler provoked angry responses when he told a City Council meeting that Lenise would have been treated if her parents had carried her to the hospital instead of calling for an ambulance, but he was only pointing out a simple fact about health care: the law requires hospitals to treat any patient who shows up at the emergency room doors, but allows them to send ambulances away—provided it's for medical and not financial reasons. He added that the tragedy was due to a city-wide lack of emergency health care facilities for children, not the perfidy of one hospital. But according to Jeffrey Goldberg, a lawyer representing the Nelsons in a lawsuit against Wyler, while the pediatric ICU was full the emergency room was not, and the ER at Wyler was better equipped than the one at St. Bernard to save Lenise's life. Three years later, the case has not yet been settled.

If Lenise Nelson was in fact turned away from Wyler because she lacked insurance, then the decision was not only unethical but illegal. While we will probably never know if Lenise was denied medical care because she was poor, that has certainly happened

to others. The practice is known in the hospital trade as "patient dumping." When health care is treated as a business, hospitals are naturally reluctant to provide care for patients who can't pay. Patient dumping is one result—transferring unstable patients who lack insurance to public hospitals. The problem is widespread, according to some studies; during the mid-80's Public Citizen's Health Research Group estimated that 250,000 patients a year were sent away from hospital emergency rooms for financial reasons. The National Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Health in America gave a figure of "at least 200,000" for 1983.

During the heyday of patient dumping, "the University of Chicago Hospital was a very active dumper," says David Ansell, a doctor at Cook County hospital who has studied the problem extensively. Robert Nolan, a physician who worked in the U of C emergency room until 1987, agrees: although "we saw everyone who came in, un- or under-insured patients would be transferred to Cook County Hospital." According to Dr. Lance Becker, who currently works in the U of C emer-

gency room, "a few years ago, this hospital was notorious for sending unstable patients to Cook County Hospital. People who were shot, who were bleeding to death, the University of Chicago would put those people on an ambulance and send them over to Cook County." And today? "To a lesser degree, it still goes on."

"[A] few years ago, this hospital was notorious for sending unstable patients to Cook County Hospital. People who were shot, who were bleeding to death, the University of Chicago would put those people on an ambulance and send them over to Cook County....To a lesser degree, it still goes on."

Patient dumping by city hospitals reached an enormous scale. By the mid-80's, Dr. Ansell found, approximately 40% of transfers to Cook County arrived in an unstable condition and 10% subsequently died; Cook County's eventual solution was to temporarily refuse all transfers. Although it was not the only hospital involved, the U of C contributed more than its share of dumping throughout this period. "It's one of the pri-

mary reasons why I left the U of C", Dr. Nolan explains. "I became a doctor to help people who needed treatment, not to send them somewhere else."

Congress, in an effort to end patient dumping, passed the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act as part of the 1986 Comprehensive Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). The new laws required hospitals that receive Medicare funds—the vast majority of all US hospitals—to provide a screening examination for all patients who presented themselves at the emergency room, and to provide any emergency care needed to stabilize the patient's condition. No

one who had not yet been stabilized could be sent to another hospital unless the transfer was at the patient's request or the hospital believed itself unable to stabilize the patient. In either case, a physician had to certify that the benefits outweighed the risks, the receiving hospital had to accept the transfer, and appropriate transportation had to be available.

The law thus addressed the

continued on page 4

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The Grey City Journal
Ida Noyes Hall

Grey City Manifesto

If you've gotten this far, there are probably a few questions you need to have cleared up. Why is *Greys* spelled wrong? Why is the paper called a journal if it only comes out once a week? *Where's the sports section?*

Don't ask us. But the question you should *really* be asking is, Why the *Grey City Journal*? Why have a paper that recycles newsprint, when it could just recycle corporate press releases? Why base a left-wing rag at the University of Chicago, the intellectual birthplace of Milton Friedman and plutonium; a place whose greatest claim to fame is its role in incinerating a hundred thousand people on an August day some fifty years ago? Why at the university that gave a *humanitarian* award to Robert McNamara, architect of the Vietnam War, in recognition of his Gandhian methods—napalm, Agent Orange, B-52s—of bringing peace, or at least silence, to that troubled land? After all, if conservatism is a sort of sociopolitical neutron bomb (kills people—won't scratch Property!), then the U. of C. is definitely Ground Zero.

To answer, first a little history. The *Grey City Journal* was born in 1968, and claims as its birth right all the commitment and idealism (as well as, unfortunately, all of the organizational acumen) of those heady days. For a generation it languished as the leftist section of the *Chicago Maroon*, the charmingly incoherent "Independent" student newspaper at the U. of C. Over the decades, as the *Maroon* solidified its reputation as a purveyor of garbled publicity handouts, as its editorial tone hewed ever more rigidly to the corporate line, and as its management adopted the arrogant, incompetent Bossism that has ruined the nation's economy, we at the *Grey City Journal* began to chafe.

But it was not just the humiliation of being associated with the *Maroon* that drove us to set up as an independent newspaper last spring. We know that there are many progressives, in Hyde Park and Chicago, who are hungering for an antidote to the triumphalist elitism, misogyny, racism, violence and consumerism that disfigure our culture. We know that a city so battered and yet so vibrant as Chicago must offer a refuge from the idiocy of suburban life. We know that Beverly Hills and South Central are but two sides of the same coin. We know that the American Apartheid State (an apartheid of class and sex as well as race) must be pulled down before it collapses under its own waste and brutality, and takes us all with it.

We hope that the *Grey City Journal* can make a contribution towards that transformation. We'll try to chronicle the crimes of the Establishment, laugh at its absurdities, diagnose the metabolic pathways by which it decomposes and, most importantly, point to an alternative beyond the imperatives of greed and privilege that animate its undead corpse. We'll try to scale the ideological walls that imprison everyone, whether they live in the ghettos or in the suburban settler enclaves, in an empty and increasingly depraved civilization.

Yeah, we've heard it before: In America, freedom's just another name for nothing left to bomb. Here at the *Grey City Journal*, we think it's more than that.

—Bill Boisvert

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continued from front page

two main kinds of dumping: patients being turned away at the emergency room door and patients still in need of emergency treatment being transferred to public hospitals. Had COBRA worked as intended, it would have effectively put an end to dumping. What actually happened was a case study in the operation of what William Greider calls Washington's "Grand Bazaar": The political marketplace where, except when public scrutiny is most intense, the law is not a uniform code of conduct, but merely the opening offer in Government's negotiations with Big Business.

The anti-dumping legislation gave responsibility for enforcement to the Department of Health and Human Services, but the authority to impose penalties was divided. The Health Care Finance Authority was intended to have primary responsibility for enforcing the Act, and was the only agency entitled to terminate hospitals from Medicare—a severe blow to any health care provider's bottom line and the ultimate sanction available under the Act. Authority to levy fines on hospitals, however, was given to HHS's Office of the Inspector General. The result has been a constant jockeying between the two agencies over the job of enforcing the Act—and the money allocated for it. Making matters worse, the people running HHS had been appointed by a president who sometimes seemed to want to abolish that Department. And they did their job with all the dedication one would expect from people who fervently believed that their job should not

exist.

So the horror stories about patient dumping continued to surface. In September of 1986, a young diabetic suffering from acute ketoacidosis was sent by his doctor to Methodist Hospital in Somerville, Tennessee for emergency treatment. According to a 1988 report by the House Committee on Government Operations, when hospital administrators learned that he had no insurance, he was physically dragged from his bed in the intensive care unit and abandoned in the hospital parking lot. He died the next day. The hospital confirmed that the young man had been denied treatment because he was uninsured, but HCFA investigators found the hospital in complete compliance with the law and declined to impose any penalty.

The House Committee found such reluctance to take action against hospitals to be typical. In the first 18 months after the law was passed, HCFA reported only 129 allegations of patient dumping, at a time when independent studies estimated 200-250,000 cases a year. To be sure, the law could be enforced on such a small scale and still be effective as a deterrent, if punishment for violators were quick, sure and proportionate to the violation—but a distinctive feature of politics is that this is never the case when the wrongdoers are powerful and well-connected. In the 18 months examined by the Committee on Government Operations, the OIG levied only two small fines and no hospitals were suspended from Medicare.

"The first time the law came

in, it didn't have much effect," concedes Dr. Ansell, whose testimony played a large role in its passage. "But then the law came in a second time, and it had a huge impact." In the wake of the committee's report, amendments were made to the law to streamline enforcement and especially to publicize its provisions so that patients, doctors, and private citizens would be able to report violations. Not everyone is as sanguine about the changes as Dr. Ansell, but it is certainly true that there has been progress in enforcement of the law. Quentin Young, a doctor at Hyde Park Associates who has been active in the politics of health care for over twenty-five years, says that COBRA "had a dampening effect...it definitely curbed that type of behavior, but it did not eliminate it."

In the last two years the Department of Health and Human Services has identified more violations of the patient dumping law than it did in the first four, in a period when most independent observers agree that the actual incidence of dumping was going down. But in other respects the new legislation has been at best a qualified success. After all, it makes no difference how well a law is conceived and framed if the executive branch is unwilling to enforce it.

In the six and a half years since the original passage of COBRA, HHS has identified 302 cases of patient dumping, involving 268 different hospitals. Yet over this period HCFA terminated only seven hospitals from Medicare (four were later reinstated) and OIG imposed only 17 fines. The remaining 91% of the hospitals

found to have made illegal transfers—putting patients' lives at risk—were not penalized, on condition that they take "corrective action".

Such a dismal record is a natural consequence of the illogical division of responsibilities within HHS. HCFA initiates investigations, but when it finds a hospital in violation it is understandably reluctant to suspend it from Medicare, since its mandate also requires that it ensure Medicare patients as many venues for health care as possible. But a fine, the most reasonable penalty for most violations, cannot be imposed until the OIG has done its own, separate investigation, and has received a report from the appropriate peer review organization. According to a March 1993 report by Public Citizen, OIG officials have described this arrangement as "poorly coordinated, time-consuming, and duplicative." But putting all the responsibility for enforcing COBRA under one roof would require shifting some funding from one agency to the other, and so far neither has been willing to accept being on the losing end of such a deal.

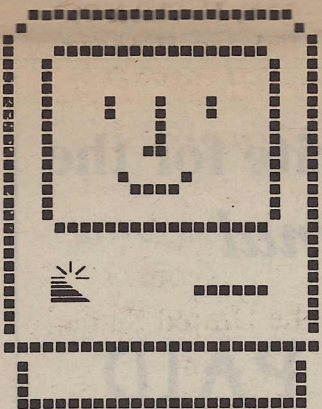
Of the 17 fines the OIG has imposed for patient dumping, the U of C Hospitals have received two—an accomplishment matched by only one other American hospital. One of those fines was, at \$40,000, apparently the third largest fine the OIG has imposed. I say "apparently" because many of the agreements under which fines are imposed include a promise by the Department of Health and Human Services "not to affirma-

tively publicize" the fine, another example of negotiable punishment for lawbreakers who can afford it. Not surprisingly, considering its dependence on good public relations, the U of C has insisted on such nondisclosure agreements on the fines it has paid.

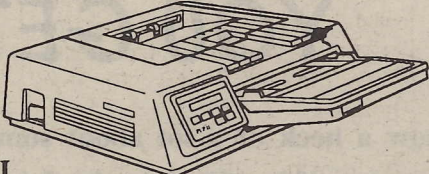
Nonetheless, it is clear that Dr. Ansell is more right than wrong when he says that the revised version of COBRA has been more successful at curbing dumping, at least as far as Chicago goes. Patient dumping, while still a crime against the person transferred, is not the main strategy hospitals use today to avoid losing too much money treating the indigent. Proof of this comes from the harried staff of the Cook County Hospital emergency room, the destination of most dumped patients. "Because the penalties are great, people have learned not to do it," says Dr. Michael McDermott, head of Emergency Medicine at Cook County. The authors of Public Citizen's report on patient dumping agree, emphasizing that while the problem has not gone away, "the rate of such denials [of emergency treatment] has unquestionably decreased since the law took effect." Or as Dr. Ansell puts it, "this is one case where legislation worked."

**Trauma Patients:
No room in the ER**

So has the U of C begun providing the uninsured with the same high level of care it gives to its paying patients? Hardly. "The terrain has shifted," says Dr. McDermott. Although overt dumping has diminished, the uninsured may have more trouble than before in getting into some hospi-



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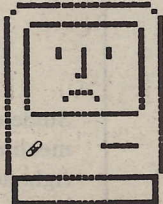
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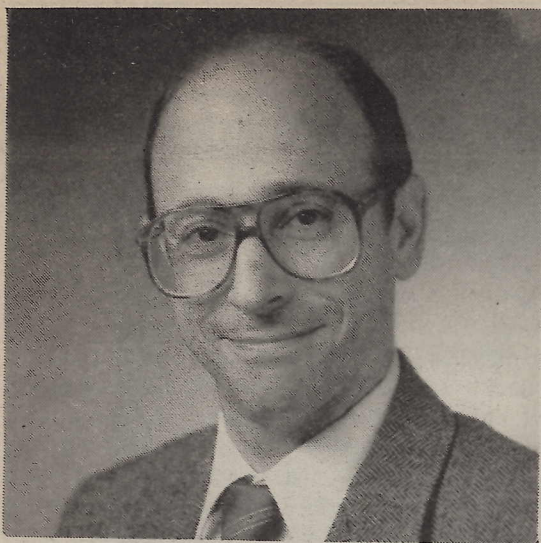
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MATT ROTH

The Emergency Treatment and Labor Act and patient dumping

Dr. Lance Becker (left): "It still goes on." Dr. David Ansell (right): "This is one case where legislation worked."

tals..

In the past, some of the worst money-losers for hospitals were trauma patients—victims with life-threatening injuries from car accidents, gunshot wounds and the like. In areas like the South Side, gunshot injuries are especially common, and the victims tend not to be insured. What is worse from the point of view of a hospital like the U of C, ambulances normally bring these patients to the nearest large hospital. By the mid 80's the University of Chicago Hospitals claimed to be losing over a million dollars a year on uncompensated care for trauma victims.

In 1986, the Chicago Health Department established a city-wide trauma network, consisting of ten hospitals with the sophisticated equipment needed to treat trauma patients, and personnel on duty around the clock. The goal of the system was to ensure that patients with severe injuries were not taken to emergency rooms lacking the facilities to treat them. The U of C, one of the best-equipped hospitals in Chicago, was initially a member of the trauma network; after less than two years, however, it dropped out, followed by Weiss Hospital, Michael Reese, and Loyola. According to Susan Phillips, UCH Vice-President for Public Relations, the hospital had no objection to providing uncompensated care for trauma victims but "was overloaded" because the city insisted on directing an excessive number of trauma patients to the U of C. At the time, however, an administrator told a reporter for the Sun-Times that the decision was made "for financial reasons". The decision to leave the trauma network came shortly after the U of C received a large fine for sending unstabilized patients to Cook County for emergency care. It may be that the UCH administration felt that far more money would be lost on trauma patients as restrictions on transferring them to Cook County were tightened.

With UCH out of the trauma network and Michael Reese Hospital sold to Humana, there are now no trauma centers left on the South Side. What has this meant for the people who live there? Dr. McDermott of Cook County points out that the average delay in reaching an emergency room has increased by only about three minutes. But, he adds, this includes patients picked up from around the margins of the area previously served by the U of C, whose delays have not increased at all. Like many averages, this one conceals significant variation. Someone shot a block from the U of C, if picked up by an ambulance, would be taken all the way to Cook County hospital, a twenty minute

ride under the best conditions. Of course, there are those who think that even this delay isn't that bad. You have to put it in perspective, says David Howes, a physician at the U of C: "transport time [to an emergency room] in any part of Chicago is much shorter than, say, in Detroit."

Wyer Hospital has a much better overall record for treatment of the uninsured than the rest of the University of Chicago hospitals. Its history and mission and the temperament of the people who run it may have something to do with this, but the main reason is that it is much more lucrative to treat low-income children than low-income adults. Children—"peds" in the medical-business lingo—are covered by Medicaid, unlike unemployed male adults, and the reimbursements tend to cover the cost of routine treatment, if not expensive emergency care, with a bit of profit left over. So Wyer has, among other things, remained on the pediatric trauma network, which is separate from the one for adults. Only because Wyer is a part of the trauma network did the ambulance diversion in 1990 get such attention. It's important to realize that what happened to Lenise is no different from what happens to every adult who is seriously injured in the vicinity of the U of C. As Dr. Becker points out, although the average delays are "relatively small," when someone has suffered a severe injury even a small delay can make a difference of life or death. "There could be some deaths" that have been caused by the U of C's decision to leave the trauma network.

Medicaid Patients: Separate but Equal?

In the modern inner-city, trauma patients represent only a fraction of visits to emergency rooms. For those without insurance, the emergency room has

become a site for primary care as well. For many, physicians in the emergency room are the only doctors they ever see. Thus, a large percentage of emergency room patients arrive under their own power, not via ambulance. Among the provisions of the COBRA legislation was a requirement that "hospitals provide an appropriate screening examination to all persons who present themselves for emergency treatment." What constitutes an "appropriate" exam is always open to question,

Susan Phillips, UCH Vice-President for Government and Press Affairs:
"Well, historically, this institution has attracted people interested in doing the most difficult science—not to disparage public health. But there aren't any Nobel prizes in public health research, you know."

though, and many hospitals have been quick to exploit this ambiguity; about one-quarter of the violations of the patient dumping law since its passage have been for failing to provide an adequate examination. Even observers quite critical of the U of C on other grounds agree that this is not a major problem here, though: if you need emergency care you at least get examined, and you generally get treatment. Many people who lack of insurance are less fortunate when it comes to necessary but non-emergency care.

"There was a time," says Dr. Becker, "when from the [U of C] emergency room, people with insurance could get appointments

in the [Internal Medicine] clinic. People without insurance—they couldn't get appointments in the clinic." According to Susan Phillips, UCH provides care for everyone who shows up at the emergency room—emergency treatment for those who need it, and a "fast track" for non-emergency care. She adds, however, that patients without insurance will be referred to Cook County's Fantus clinic or to other free clinics for follow-up care. Dr. Howes describes the policy more colorfully: "There is no necessity for [U of C Hospitals] to provide any care except initial emergency care. After that the marketplace steps in." According to Dr. Becker, the policy of turning away the uninsured was changed "some time ago."

Another issue arises with respect to patients who are insured under Medicaid. To deny such patients care on an equal basis with privately insured patients is a violation of the Hill-Burton Act, which allocated money for loans to hospitals for construction and modernization. Although the U of C has long since paid off the 1.6 million dollar loan it received under the Act, the law obligates hospitals "in perpetuity" to accept patients whose only insurance is Medicaid on the same terms as those with commercial insurance.

The U of C has posted signs in its clinics informing patients that Medicaid was accepted on exactly the same terms as commercial insurance. According to Susan Phillips, though patients with no insurance at all may be referred elsewhere, now "there is no difference" in the care available to patients with Medicaid and that available to those with commercial insurance. But there is considerable evidence that this is not the case.

I asked Dr. Becker if in his experience there were significant differences in the treatment received by Medicaid patients and that given to those with commercial insurance.

Was there ever a longer wait for treatment? Were Medicaid patients ever sent to separate and perhaps inferior facilities? Might someone with Medicaid be deliberately discouraged from seeking treatment at the U of C at all? "Yes," he said. "I think all of that happens."

To put Dr. Becker's judgment to the test, a colleague and I made a series of calls to the U of C's internal medicine clinic on September 23 and 24. We tried to make appointments under assumed names, identifying our insurance as Blue Cross/Blue Shield in half the calls and Medicaid in the other half, but otherwise giving the same answers to all questions. The results were striking.

Source of payment was always the first question we were asked; when the answer was Blue Cross/Blue Shield we were given an appointment in the first week of October immediately, without being asked any questions or being put on hold; we were also told the name of the doctor we would see. When our insurance was Medicaid, we were transferred, usually several times, and left on hold for at least three minutes. In all three Medicaid trials we were questioned closely about our symptoms. But we were not given appointments at the Internal Medicine Clinic; we were instead given appointments with an unnamed doctor at the Patient Evaluation Clinic, apparently to see if we really needed treatment. All of these appointments were for the first week of November a month later than the appointments given to Blue Cross patients. On one of the Medicaid trials, we were told that the Internal Medicine Clinic "no longer accepts Medicaid patients"; on another it was suggested that we "could get an appointment faster" at the Osteopathic Hospital.

I tried the same experiment at UCH's gynecology clinic by calling in claiming to want to make an appointment for my wife. When I told the clinic my wife had Blue Cross insurance, she was given an appointment for October 18 with no wait, was offered the choice of seeing a male or female doctor, and was told the name of the doctor she would be seeing. When the insurance was Medicaid, I was left on hold for 3 minutes, was neither

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continued from page 5

asked if she preferred a male or female doctor nor told her doctor's name. I was given an appointment at the clinic—on November 29, well over a month later than the appointment I was given with Blue Cross. Once again, the evidence of illegal discrimination was clear-cut.

Generally speaking, only women and children are eligible for Medicaid. Adult men without insurance are in even worse shape. Unless they can pay out of their pocket, people with no insurance whatsoever can get no treatment at the U of C except in the emergency room. This form of discrimination is perfectly legal, since the Hill-Burton Act only prohibits discriminating between kinds of insurance. I suggested to Dr. Howes of the U. of C. emergency room that perhaps UCH ought to provide some medical care for the totally uninsured, he disagreed. "People with no insurance at all are generally young men," he pointed out correctly, "well, how old are you?" I told him. "And when was the last time you needed major medical care?" I admitted that it had been quite some time. "There you go," he said, "these are generally not people who need regular medical care." I imagined that this sort of attitude, if widespread, may have quite an impact on the hospital's policy towards the uninsured.

None of this would come as a surprise to the people who live in the low-income neighborhoods south and west of Hyde Park, says Anita Mason, who investigated Medicaid discrimination at the U of C for the Coalition for Better Health Care. "People in the community... just assume that the U of C isn't going to treat them," she explains, summarizing the results of dozens of interviews she conducted with neighborhood residents. "People who live five or ten minutes away from there will go to South Shore or the Jackson Park instead of going to the University of Chicago. Or they'll go to Cook County." Although Mason had heard a num-

ber of anecdotes about people in need of serious but non-emergency care turned away from the U of C and of rude or inferior treatment of those who were seen, there was no way of verifying them. But as she herself points out, as important as specific individual experiences is the depth of aversion to the U of C in poor neighborhoods. "People just don't go there," she says. "The question is, why?" The reason may simply be that they know what to expect.

Ignoring the Patients of Today: Doctors, the Free Market and the U. of C.

"The problem of health care," a writer commented in a recent issue of *The New Republic*, "is simply what to do when consumers want more of a particular good than they are willing to pay for." It would be an interesting problem in intellectual history to ask how over the last ten or twenty years economics has promoted itself outside academic circles so effectively that today many people apparently believe it is impossible to discuss real-world problems except in the language of economics. But whatever you may read in *The New Republic*, health care can be thought of in other ways besides as a commodity. Not surprisingly, medical professionals have criteria for successful health care policy quite as precise as any economist's.

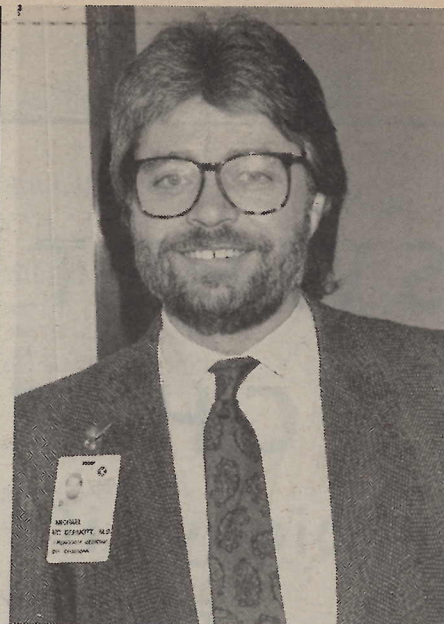
"Financial access is not everything," says Dr. McDermott of Cook County. "In some ways that's the easier part of the question—not that it's easy—and the harder part of the question is, are we going to emphasize the training of primary-care physicians who practice what you could call 'denominator-based' medicine?" Denominator, or population-based, medicine is medicine judged not on the quality of the 'good' the hospital is selling (the care people who pay for medical services receive) but on the general level of health in the community as a whole. "What percentage of the population in a given area has a blood pressure of above 110? How did you do this

year as compared with last year? That's the challenge. Not 'of those people who overcame the insults and practical and financial obstacles and got into your clinic, how did you do', which most people can't answer either, but in the community that you try to serve, how did you do? Did you reduce infant mortality in the community? Not only that, but part of [doctors'] pay should be geared to general health indices."

I asked Susan Phillips about denominator-based medicine: "That's not our mission. The University of Illinois has more of a public health focus. Our mission is to do basic research to cure the diseases of tomorrow," she said, showing me a six page spread in *Chicago* magazine about cancer research at the U of C. "We don't even have a school of public health. And of course the proportion of Medicaid patients among people getting, say, surgery for a brain tumor is low because that's a rare condition." Aside from an institutional ignorance of basic principles of statistics, why does the U of C have this mission? Isn't it possible to do basic research on public health, on delivering health care to people, on preventative medicine? "Well, historically, this institution has attracted people interested in doing the most difficult science—not to disparage public health. But there aren't any Nobel prizes in public health research, you know."

All the doctors I spoke to, however, expressed ideas similar to Dr. McDermott's. Preventative care, says Dr. Young, "is where issues of mercy and ethical responsibility end" for today's private health-care providers. "If I come to your clinic and want a checkup or I've had a headache for two years and I don't have it now—in other words there's no emergency—[most hospitals] would look at your insurance and say, 'you don't have the resources. Can you pay privately?' And if you say no, they'll say you have to go somewhere else." The lack of decent neighborhood-based ambulatory (i.e. non-emergency) care, emphasizing prevention, health education, and life-style reform (e.g. discouraging smoking, drinking, and obesity) is, in Dr. Young's words, "the shameful black hole in American medicine." The U of C's Dr. Becker puts it more starkly: if the goal were simply to save lives, he says, the U of C "would just do 100% preventative health care" instead of cutting-edge research. And what does the hospital actually do along those lines? "I don't really know of anything here that you would call preventative health care."

Many people, rightly or wrongly, believe that a hospital's first priority should be to save lives of people in the community in which it's located. It's not impossible to run a hospital that way—Cook County Hospital provides care for everyone who walks through its doors. There are a number of smaller hospitals in Chicago which manage to stay in business with Medicaid loads of 60% or more. It's simply a question of economizing elsewhere. Thousands of young Chicagoans grow up without immunizations. It may not always be profitable to immunize children, but then much of the research done at the U of C is not profitable either: it's done to fulfill UCH's "mission" to



Dr. Michael McDermott, head of Emergency Medicine at Cook County Hospital.

provide a haven for high-tech medical research and as a loss leader to build the hospital's reputation. But it's only because other institutions make saving lives their first priority that we can have the luxury of exotic medical research here.

"Cost-shifting" in the medical parlance usually refers to increasing charges to paying patients to cover the costs of uncompensated care, but it could have another meaning as well. American society is still sufficiently civilized that we refuse to allow people to die in the streets simply because they are poor. We don't expect children born in this country to die of easily prevented diseases, and we don't expect epidemics to regularly sweep our cities. So far, in other words, some basic medical standards still take priority over economic criteria. Meeting these minimal standards is the first responsibility of our hospitals and other health care providers. Someone shot on 61st street will get emergency treatment one way or another, even if he or she cannot pay for it. The question then is, who will? U of C Hospitals are understandably anxious to avoid costs like this, but society pays them one way or another, whether through the taxpayer subsidy to Cook County or through inner-city hospitals with missions different from the U of C's, which often go under. Most people realize this. So why is the U of C so intransigent?

"There's this constant battle back and forth," says Dr. Becker. On the one hand are the physicians, "who basically want to provide care to everyone they can", and on the other are the financial and administrative personnel. The administrators are always anxious to cut back on health care that's not profitable, and who can blame them? When hospitals are run as businesses, the financial incentives against doing the right thing are enormous. Who would have thought otherwise? Only cretins and religious fanatics imagine that all of society can or should be governed by a single principle. Markets are fine for setting the price of onions, but they don't do so well on health care. Perhaps it's time we let the doctors run the hospitals. ■

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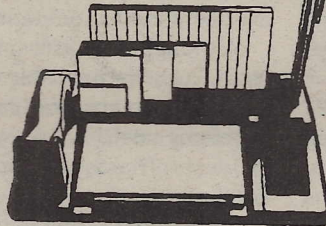
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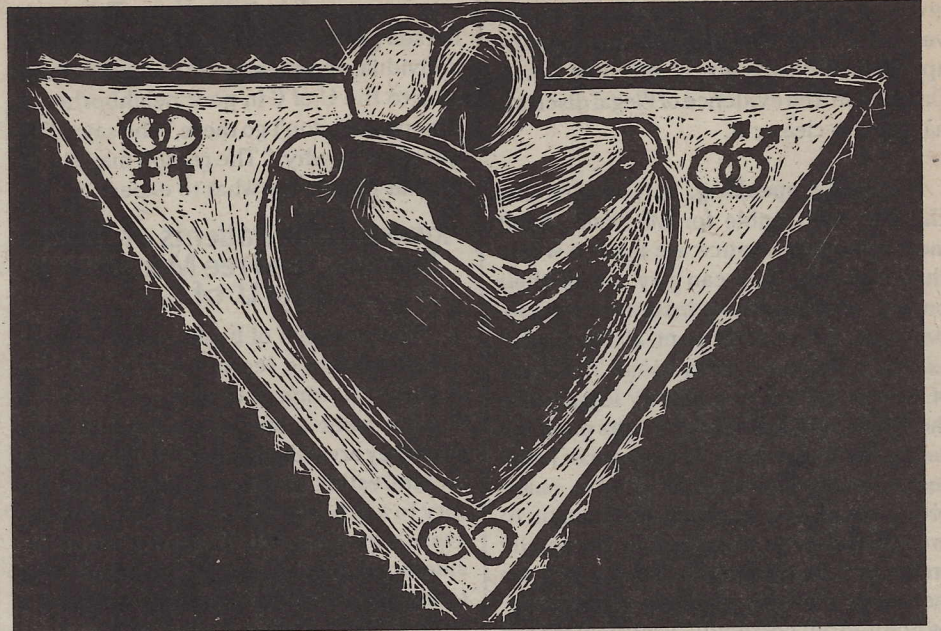
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SWEET HOMO CHICAGO

Lesbigay Life in Hyde Park and Chicago

by Sarah C. Lawsky



When I was a first year, I used to call the GALA office three or four times a week, listen for the message on the answering machine, and then hang up at the beep. I became fond of the voices I heard every week and practically rejoiced when a woman's voice was on the machine. But not all first years are as timid as I was. Those willing to wander outside of their dorm rooms will find that both the University of Chicago and the city of Chicago have a wide range of resources available to gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals.

The University is changing for the better. Last year the University instituted a domestic partnership policy which, although about ten years late, does include health insurance among its benefits and thus is among the strongest of the domestic partnership policies of any university around the country. This year representatives from the same faculty and staff lesbian and gay group that lobbied for the domestic partnership policy will continue to meet with the administration; a meeting with Hugo Sonnenschein, the new president, is scheduled for this fall. And while the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community at the University of Chicago may not be as high profile as similar communities at other schools, there is a fair amount of activity, including a variety of organizations and a few classes specifically on gay and lesbian issues.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance is the oldest lesbigay group on campus. With energetic new leadership, GALA looks promising this year. "We plan to be very visible with a program inclusive to sex, politics, and fun," says Troy Parker, one of the two co-presidents of GALA and a fourth-year in the college. In the past few years the group has been predominantly male, but the new leadership—including female co-president Dena Van der Waal—hopes to incorporate more women into the group. For instance, this year's plans include Dykefest 93. However GALA may change, though, it will continue to provide its traditional forums, including the weekly coming out group.

While bisexuals share many of the same concerns as gays and lesbians, some issues are bi-specific. "I needed a place where I could talk about how my relationships were going in general...I personally just wanted a place where I could be comfortable talking about both [relationships with men and with women]—a space where you could just relax and talk about the whole picture," says Heather Blair, a graduate student who helped found the University of Chicago Bisexual Union four years ago. UCBU now has more than forty members and sponsors events ranging from a yearly Biathlon (which includes a barbecue at the Point followed by a trip to a North Side bar for dancing) to (sometimes rowdy) weekly meetings to networking via computer with North Side bi groups. "We want to get a couple of outside speakers and maybe have an actual discussion topic at times," says Blair, "but we have agreed that our number one function is support."

South Side Dykes was formed in the spring of 1992 because of the lack of women in GALA. "We exist to bring together students and non-students on and off campus. We're trying to work on forging more links with lesbians outside of the University...who just live and work on the South Side," says Stephanie Friedman, a graduate student at the University. In addition to its weekly meetings, the groups sponsors movies, picnics, and excursions to the north side, and this year intends to put together a monthly coffeehouse which will feature performances by local talent. "We're always open and welcoming to new faces and seeing new people," says Friedman.

Along with these more general University-wide groups, there are also lesbian groups serving particular parts of the community. The Lesbian and Gay Faculty and Staff Organization, initially formed to look at issues of domestic partnership, now meets to examine other issues that affect gay and lesbian faculty, students, and staff. It also holds a yearly reception for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and has printed a handy little purple flier with information about various lesbian and gay resources around the city. The law school has a strong gay and lesbian group—and a

scholarship specifically for gay and lesbian students. And the Gay and Lesbian Studies Workshop, open to undergraduate as well as graduate students, meets every other week during the school year to discuss papers in gay and lesbian studies, often with professors who are visiting the campus, including, in recent years, Douglas Crimp, Eve Sedgwick, and Tom Kalin.

The college also offers classes in gender studies, two of which are specifically about gay or lesbian issues. This fall, Beth Freeman is teaching *Sexing the Text: The Lesbian in Literature and Film*, which may well make history as the first University of Chicago class with the word "lesbian" in the title. And in the spring, George Chauncey, co-editor of *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, is offering a gay and lesbian history course, *The Social History of American Subculture*. Neither of these classes has ever been offered before this year.

However, all is not sunshine and roses at the University of Chicago. Twice in the last ten years there have been incidents of extreme, methodical harassment of gay students, and twice the University has failed to respond to the satisfaction of the lesbigay community. Most recently, in the spring of 1991 several gay male graduate students received repeated death threats, and one was attacked by several men outside of a University building. The University offered a reward for information leading to apprehension of the harassers, but many students on campus felt that the University was halfhearted and late, and there were protests for weeks on campus.

The University of Chicago also does poorly in serving the health needs of lesbians and gay men. The University Health Service, like most health services in this country, is notorious for its insensitivity towards gay men and lesbians. Womancare, the gynecology clinic at the Health Service, is rife with heterosexism. Last I heard, all women were still asked what kind of birth control they used. Since the assumption on the part of many of the health care providers is that the woman they're dealing with is straight, it's often up to the client to explain the situation. This explanation is sometimes only an invitation to more trouble, as some providers simply don't know what lesbians even do, much less what lesbians' specific health care needs are. Some health care providers at Womancare, such as Maryann Schroder, are more aware of problems that lesbians might have in the health care system, but a lesbian or bisexual woman who makes an appointment at Womancare should be careful about whom she selects as her provider. Also, it is wise not to get tested for HIV at the University Health Service. The city of Chicago has free testing at various sites around the city, and those tests are absolutely anonymous.

Although the harassment and health service issues are probably of greatest concern to most lesbians and gay men here, other problems exist. For example, there have been incidents of harassment in the residence halls, and heterosexism and homophobia do crop up from time to time in the classroom or on the quads. But despite the great distance that still has to be covered, the University of Chicago seems to be moving in the right direction when it comes to gay, lesbian, and bisexual students.

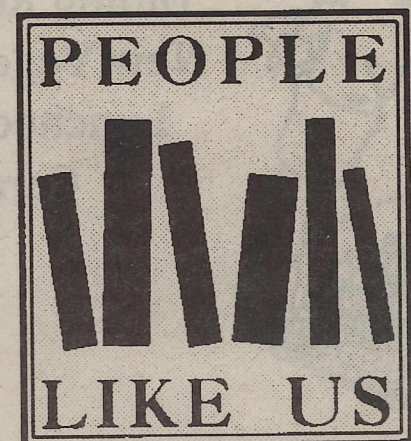
Outside of Hyde Park, the city of Chicago has a variety of resources for gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals. Most of the lesbigay bars, bookstores, and cultural life is centered in the Lakeview area (also called Boystown, for the obvious reason), which is easily accessible by bus or train. Chicago has more women's bars than any other city in the country. Among the more popular are Paris Dance and Augie & CK's, which both have dancing, and the Closet, which does not have a dance

floor. Boys frequent Roscoe's and Vortex, among many, many others. Charlie's in the Near North neighborhood is a spacious haven for those seeking a gay country and western atmosphere. For those not old enough to get into bars, Horizons Community Services offers groups specifically for younger lesbians and gays. Horizons also has two hotlines, one for general information and support and one specifically for people who have been gay-bashed.

Also on the North Side are Unabridged Books Inc.—which, though not exclusively gay, has an outstanding gay and lesbian section—and People Like Us, Chicago's gay bookstore. Along with a selection of fiction, nonfiction, gay newspapers from around the country, and pornography, People Like Us has lesbigay tchotchkes (including queer refrigerator magnets), music, posters, and cards. Many other stores in the area also carry items of lesbian, gay, or bisexual interest. Further north is Women and Children First, a women's bookstore which has a fine lesbian section.

For more information about bars, bookstores, and weekly events, check any of Chicago's extraordinary selection of gay papers. The *Windy City Times*, published each Thursday, is the most news-oriented, but it also includes bar information and the basic gay gossip columns. *Nightlines*, which comes out Wednesdays, is somewhat smaller and includes less news but more cartoons. At the beginning of each month the publishers of *Nightlines* publish *Outlines*, which is tabloid-sized and includes extensive gossip columns, two Dykes to Watch Out For cartoons, and a round-up of the past month's events. These papers will also carry the schedule this fall of the annual Chicago gay and lesbian film festival, which features films from all over the world. All the papers are available on campus at the Reynolds Club, the University Bookstore, and the Regenstein library.

Eventually, of course, I did make it out of my dorm room and over the past few years have been initiated into the wonders of weekly meetings and the omniscient lesbian grapevine. While it's true that life at the University of Chicago is not yet an idyll for homos, Hyde Park and Chicago at large have a lot to offer lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, if you're willing to seek it out.



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GREY CITY CALENDAR

ART

OPENING

The Art Institute of Chicago presents *Illustrations by Keiko Narahashi* (Saturday, Oct. 2 through March 27) and *Focus on Fiber Art* (Wednesday, Oct. 6 through February 27), featuring pieces from the textile selection.

Artists, Residents of Chicago presents Iris Goldstein, *Suspended Motion*; Judy Sowa, *Paintings and Objects*; Susan Strack, mixed media paintings; Miichel Gamundi, *Between the Shutters*, mixed media; Rob Lorenson, *Three Volumes*, installation. Fri, Oct. 1 through Oct 30. Hours: Tu-Sat, 11am-5pm. 1040 W. Huron, 733-2787.

Columbia College Art Gallery presents *Tertiary Dialogues: Works by Bernard M. Wideroe*. Monday, Oct. 4 through November 24. Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-4pm. 72 E. 11th.

Klein Art Works presents ceramic

Sculpture by Jun Kaneko. Friday, Oct. 1-Oct. 10. Hours: Tu-Sat, 10am-5:30pm. 400 N. Michigan. 243-0400.

The Mexican Fine Arts Museum presents its 7th Annual **Day of the Dead Exhibit**, featuring altar/installations, paintings, mixed media, prints, folk art and photography. Friday, Oct. 1 Through Dec. 5. Hours: Tu-Sun, 10am-5pm. 1852 W. 19th. 738-1503.

The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago presents an exhibition of portraits and sculpture by Robin Winters. Sunday, Oct. 3 through November 7. 5811 S. Ellis, 702-8670.

ONGOING

The Art Institute of Chicago presents **Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism**, through Nov. 30. Hours: Mon, Wed-Fri, 10:30am-4:30pm; Tues 10:30am-8pm; Sat 10am-5pm; Sun noon-5pm. 111 S. Michigan, 443-

3600.

Beret International Gallery presents work by Eric Dietz, Greg Jones and Katharine Schutta through October 9. Hours: Thu 1-7:30pm; Fri-Sat 1-5pm. 2211 N. Elston. 489-6518/489-0282.

The Hyde Park Art Center presents *Not Not*, an exhibition which investigates dismantled language in visual art, featuring works by Phil Berkman, Steven Lapthisiphon, Michael Moreth, Ginger Roberts, M. W. Burns and Xeno Xenas. Through Oct. 16. Hours: Tues-Sat, 11am-5pm. 5307 S. Hyde Park Blvd. 324-5520.

Klein Art Works presents new paintings by Stephanie Weber. Through Oct. 16. Hours: Tu-Sat, 10am-5:30pm. 400 N. Michigan. 243-0400.

MWMWM Gallery presents *The Look* an installation by Ginger Roberts, through October 9. Hours: Thur-Sat, 1-5pm. 1255 S. Wabash. 786-0782.

Tough Gallery presents *Inflorescence*, a sculpture installation by Jo Hormuth, through October 16. Hours: Thurs 1-7pm; Thurs-Fri 1-5pm. 415 N. Sangamon Street. 829-7100.

DANCE

ODADAA! an ensemble of Ghanaian dancers and musicians will perform Thursday, Oct. 7, 12:15 and 5:30pm and Friday, Oct. 8, 12:15 pm at the Chicago Public Library auditorium, 400 S. State. 747-4800.

FOLK

Celebrated folk-singers **Robin and Linda Williams** will perform with Jim Watson and Kevin Maul on dobro. Also performing are Jody Stecher and Kate Brislin who sing blue-grass and old-time duets accompanied by banjo, mandolin and guitar. Saturday, Oct. 2, 7, 10pm, at the Old Town School of Folk Music, 909 W. Armitage. 525-7793.

JAZZ

Jim Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band presents a **Tribute to Art Hodes**, featuring Kenny Davern, Butch Thompson, and Chicago Jazz artists Franz Jackson, Bobby Lewis, Truck parham, John Watson, and Jerry Coleman. Tix \$15-18 at the door, also available at Ticketmaster (559-1212). For info call the Jazz Institute of Chicago, 427-1676.

Noontime Concert featuring a program of Ibero-American music performed by Teresa Orantes, soprano and Laura Fenster, piano. Thursday, Oct. 7, 12:15pm at Goodspeed Recital Hall, 1010 E. 59th. 702-8484.

LECTURES

Forked Tongues Censorship in the PC: Post-Communism and Political Correctness. A talk with Andrei Codrescu, the Romanian-born poet and essayist. Friday, Oct. 1, 6pm at the Rubloff Auditorium of the Art Institute, Michigan and Adams. Free.

LITERARY EVENTS

Kim Wozencraft, author of *Rush* will discuss her new novel *Notes From the Country Club*, the story of a battered woman who kills her

husband in self-defense. Thursday, Sept. 30, 7:30pm at Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark. 769-9299.

Paula Hardin, author of *What Are You Doing With the Rest of Your Life? Choices in Mid-life*, will discuss how to avoid becoming bitter and disillusioned. Tuesday, Oct. 5, 7:15pm at Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark. 769-9299.

Bobbie Ann Mason, author of *Love Life and In Country*, will read from her new novel *Feather Crowns*. Friday, Oct. 1, 7:30pm at Barbara's Bookstore, 3130 N. Broadway. 477-0411.

Frank Conroy, author of *Stop-Time* and *Mid-air* will read from his new novel *Body and Soul*. Wednesday, Oct. 6, 7:30pm at Barbara's Bookstore, 1350 N. Wells. 642-5044.

PERFORMANCE

Dan Kwong will perform excerpts from his new work *Monkhood in 3 Easy Lessons*, a piece which challenges the historical emasculation of Asian men and the legacy of anti-Asian racism in America. Sunday, Oct. 2, 7pm at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbus and Jackson. 899-5100.

PHOTOGRAPHY

View some of the cutest, fiercest, most majestic animals and plants on earth before they go extinct at an exhibition of nature photography from the 1992 Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition, sponsored by the BBC Wildlife magazine and Natural History



Dykes To Watch Out For





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Cloud 42 presents ***Family Dancing***, a pair of short stories by David Leavitt adapted for the stage and directed by Justin Hayford. *Territory* is a story of a gay man who brings his lover home to meet his family, while *Aliens* depicts a woman who has lost touch with her family, including an eleven-year-old who believes, with some justification, that she is an alien. Opens **Sunday, Oct. 3**. Schedule: Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun 7pm. Tix \$12. 1543 W. Division. 477-4446.

Film in Hyde Park: The University of Chicago is unusually blessed with a rich and varied assortment of film-going opportunities. Three student film societies operate on campus. The oldest is Doc Films (short for Documentary Film Group), which shows few documentaries but an immense selection of second run and classic films. Weekdays are devoted to programmatic series, often showcasing the work of a single auteur director, sometimes reliving the highlights of a genre, sometimes exploring cinematic themes as they are manifested in works from many directors, eras and nations. Weekends are devoted to the money shots: Second run major releases that draw big crowds and foot the bill for the less mainstream fare during the week. The weekend shows run too heavily for my taste towards blockbusters and Disney films, but there's no arguing with *The Village Voice's* assessment of Doc as the premier campus film society in the country. Doc's auditorium, the plush Max Palevsky Cinema in Ida Noyes Hall, is superb, with not a bad seat in the house. One draw-back is the obnoxious frat-boy audiences who have made the same hilarious jokes about the opening credits for the last ten years I've been

Chicago Latino Film Festival: Sponsored by Doc Films, the Film Studies Center and the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago. **Sat, Oct. 2.** *Terra Fria/Cold Land* (António Campos, 1991, Portugal). The wife of a Portuguese fur trader is impregnated by her boss and accidentally kills him. Her husband takes responsibility and flees to Spain. 7pm. *Archipiélago* (Pablo Pérezman, 1992, Chile). A dissident architect flees Chilean police terror to an island. 9pm. Max Palevsky Cinema at Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th. Max Palevsky Cinema, Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th.

Law School Films: Friday: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Steven Spielberg, 1981). This is one of the worst, duller techno-porn

In Chicago at large you've got quite a few choices if you're interested in art movies and avant-garde film. The School of the Art Institute shows a vast range of classics, retrospectives, foreign, art and experimental films on a consistently creative and challenging schedule. It's also convenient to Hyde Park via the Number 6 Jeffery bus or the IC. Loew's Fine Arts Theater is a Loop art house on Michigan Ave, with first-run films that cater to the middle-brow Masterpiece Theater crowd. On the North Side the Music Box Theater also runs first run art films but with a slightly harder edge. Facets Multimedia runs first-run art and political films along with retrospective and auteur series. Chicago Filmmakers is an avant-garde film institute which tends toward experimental and political films.

Chicago Filmmakers: Under Siege...This Means War (Curated by Shellie Fleming). A series of short films examining the function of warfare and the mythologies surrounding it in defining the masculine. *Nukie's Lullaby* (Jonathan Amitay, 1985) looks at the threat of nuclear proliferation. *Smothering Dreams* (Dan Reeves, 1981) looks at how our society revels in violence. *Pompeii* (Zack Stiglicz, 1993) "shreds images of dreams, desires, memories, symbols and myths into a multilayered, molten *fin-de-siecle* statement." *This is My Weapon* (Ezra Schwartz, 1993), probes the horrific reality of rape as an instrument of war. *Not if... When* (Uzi Broshi, 1992) looks at the effect of military propaganda on culture. *Outtakes—Paysage de Guerre* (1979) meditates on war and the concept of war through the medium of WWII combat footage.

Facets Multimedia: Fri-Thurs
9th Annual Chicago Latino Film
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Pipers Alley: 9th Annual Chicago Latino Film Festival. Call 642-7500 or 431-1330 for more information. 1608 N. Wells.

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OCTOBER 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 7

POLITICAL

Dinner to Honor Jack Spiegel, with David Orr, Helen Shiller, Studs Terkel and guest speaker Manning Marable. **Sunday, Oct. 3**, 5-9pm at International House, 1414 E. 59th. Tix \$25, make reservations by sending \$25 to Dinner Committee, 3411 W. Diversey Suite 1, Chicago IL 60647. Sponsored by the Illinois Committees of Correspondence. 384-8827.

On October 17, a group of 100 US citizens will challenge the ban on travel to Cuba by going there as tourists and to challenge the unjust American embargo of that beleaguered country. To help you can 1) write or call your Congressional representatives to protest the restrictions on travel to and trade with Cuba, 2) publicize the trip and prepare for the legal defense of the travellers if they are prosecuted and 3) help defray the expenses with a contribution. Please send donations to Aurora Levins Morales, 1643 Allston Way, Berkeley, Ca 94703.

ROCK

The dysfunctionells will perform at the No Exit Café on **Thursday, Sept. 30, 8:30pm.** 6970 N. Glenwood.

TELEVISION

Feedback: Haiti: Killing the Dream on Chicago Cable Access Channel 19. **Friday, Oct. 1, 10pm.**

THEATER

OPENING

Cloud 42 presents ***Family Dancing***, a pair of short stories by David Leavitt adapted for the stage and directed by Justin Hayford. *Territory* is a story of a gay man who brings his lover home to meet his family, while *Aliens* depicts a woman who has lost touch with her family, including an eleven-year-old who believes, with some justification, that she is an alien. Opens **Sunday, Oct. 3**. Schedule: Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun 7pm. Tix \$12. 1543 W. Division. 477-4446.

9th Chicago Latino Film Festival is continuing this week, **Fri, Oct. 1-Thurs, Oct 7** at a number of venues in Chicago, primarily at Facets Multimedia and Pipers Alley, but also at the University of Chicago. All films are in their native language with English subtitles. Call 431-1330 for Festival information, and see partial listings below under Campus/Hyde Park, Facets Multimedia and Pipers Alley.

CAMPUS/HYDE PARK

Film in Hyde Park: The University of Chicago is unusually blessed with a rich and varied assortment of film-going opportunities. Three student film societies operate on campus. The oldest is Doc Films (short for Documentary Film Group), which shows few documentaries but an immense selection of second run and classic films. Weekdays are devoted to programmatic series, often showcasing the work of a single auteur director, sometimes reliving the highlights of a genre, sometimes exploring cinematic themes as they are manifested in works from many directors, eras and nations. Weekends are devoted to the money shots: Second run major releases that draw big crowds and foot the bill for the less mainstream fare during the week. The weekend shows run too heavily for my taste towards blockbusters and Disney films, but there's no arguing with *The Village Voice's* assessment of Doc as the premier campus film society in the country. Doc's auditorium, the plush Max Palevsky Cinema in Ida Noyes Hall, is superb, with not a bad seat in the house. One draw-back is the obnoxious frat-boy audiences who have made the same hilarious jokes about the opening credits for the last ten years I've been

going to Doc.

By mentioning Doc first I don't mean to slight the other two film societies, International House films and Law School Films. I-House shows mainly foreign second-run films, and for my money their schedule is usually more interesting than Doc's, at least on the weekends when Doc is pre-empted by Schwarzenegger & Co. Sad to say, I-House's facilities don't measure up to the quality of its programming. Sound systems are muddy, sight lines are as often as not blocked by somebody's fat head, and the seats become quite painful about half way through the show. Law School Films shows mainly older American classics from two or more decades ago in the comfortable Law School Auditorium.

Rounding out the cinematic cornucopia is Loews Hyde Park Theater at Harper and 53rd. The fare runs almost exclusively to kick-boxing movies, cop thrillers and teen slasher flicks, and draws hordes of South Side teenagers to the neighborhood. This horrifies local burghers, but it actually makes the area pretty safe because there are throngs of moviegoers flooding through and chasing away criminals.

Chicago Latino Film Festival: Sponsored by Doc Films, the Film Studies Center and the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago. **Sat, Oct. 2.** *Terra Fria/Cold Land* (António Campos, 1991, Portugal). The wife of a Portuguese fur trader is impregnated by her boss and accidentally kills him. Her husband takes responsibility and flees to Spain. 7pm. *Archipiélago* (Pablo Pérezman, 1992, Chile). A dissident architect flees Chilean police terror to an island. 9pm. Max Palevsky Cinema at Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th. Max Palevsky Cinema, Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th.

702-8575. Sunday, Oct. 3. *Crónicas Ginecológicas* (Mónica Henríquez, 1992, Venezuela). Saga of three Venezuelan women—a singer, a festival queen and a third who commits a crime of passion—set in the 1930's and 40's. *No Sé Por Que Te Quiero Tanto/ Cannot Stop Loving You* (Laura Búa and Silvia Chanvillard, 1992, Argentina). 7pm. Cobb Hall at the University of Chicago, rm 306-11, 5811 S. Ellis. 702-8596. Tix \$6/ \$4 students, seniors, disabled. For info call Chicago Latino Cinema at 431-1330.

Doc Films: Fri: *When Harry Met Sally* (Rob Reiner, 1988) Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal star as the Meathead's idea of the quintessential U. of C. lovers, which accounts for the scene where Ryan shows Crystal how she fakes orgasms. Small bits of the movie were filmed in Hyde Park, which is the only conceivable reason for Doctoresurrect it. 7pm. *The Package*. 9pm. The shows tonight are free for first years with a coupon, but come on, you don't want to be *obvious* do you? **Mon:** Documentaries. *Berkeley in the Sixties* (Mark Kitchell, 1990). Not half as happening as Hyde Park in the Nineties. 8pm. **Tues:** Films of Alan Rudolph. *Welcome to LA* (1977). 8pm. **Wed:** *Fantomas (Episode 2)*; (Louis Feuillade, 1913). *Wo ist Coletti* (Max Mack, 1913); *Perils of Pauline (Episode 6)* (Lewis Gasnier, 1914). 8pm. **Thurs:** *Visions of Light* (Glassman et. al., 1993) Classics of cinematography through the ages. 8pm. Max Palevsky Cinema at Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th. 702-8575. Tix \$2.50 weekdays, \$3 weekends.

International House: 1414 E. 59th. No films until next Friday, Oct. 8.

Law School Films: Friday: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Steven Spielberg, 1981). This is one of the worst, duller techno-porn

cartoons ever made and is a landmark in the decline of the American cinema. 7:30pm. *Some Like It Hot* (Billy Wilder). Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon flee in drag from mobsters and are taken under the wing by cross-dressers' icon Marilyn Monroe. 9:45pm. This show free. Law School Auditorium, 1121 E. 60th.

Hyde Park Theater: *The Program*. Weekdays 5:15, 7:50, 10:15pm; Sat-Sun 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:50, 10:15pm. *The Good Son* Weekdays 5, 7:20, 9:40pm. Sat-Sun, 12 noon, 2:30, 7:20, 9:40pm. *Bronx Tale*. Weekdays 4:45, 7:30, 10pm. Sat-Sun 11:45am, 2:15, 4:45, 7:30, 10pm. *Striking Distance*. 5:30, 7:40, 9:50pm. Sat-Sun 12:30, 3, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50pm. 53rd and Harper. 288-4900.

CHICAGO

In Chicago at large you've got quite a few choices if you're interested in art movies and avant-garde film. The School of the Art Institute shows a vast range of classics, retrospectives, foreign, art and experimental films on a consistently creative and challenging schedule. It's also convenient to Hyde Park via the Number 6 Jeffery bus or the IC. Loew's Fine Arts Theater is a Loop art house on Michigan Ave, with first-run films that cater to the middle-brow Masterpiece Theater crowd. On the North Side the Music Box Theater also runs first run art films but with a slightly harder edge. Facets Multimedia runs first-run art and political films along with retrospective and auteur series. Chicago Filmmakers is an avant-garde film institute which tends toward experimental and political films.

Chicago Filmmakers: Under Siege...This Means War (Curated by Shellie Fleming). A series of short films examining the function of warfare and the mythologies surrounding it in defining the masculine. *Nukie's Lullaby* (Jonathan Amitay, 1985) looks at the threat of nuclear proliferation. *Smothering Dreams* (Dan Reeves, 1981) looks at how our society revels in violence. *Pompeii* (Zack Stiglicz, 1993) "shreds images of dreams, desires, memories, symbols and myths into a multilayered, molten *fin-de-siecle* statement." *This is My Weapon* (Ezra Schwartz, 1993), probes the horrific reality of rape as an instrument of war. *Not if... When* (Uzi Broshi, 1992) looks at the effect of military propaganda on culture. *Outtakes—Paysage de Guerre* (1979) meditates on war and the concept of war through the medium of WWII combat footage.

Facets Multimedia: Fri-Thurs
9th Annual Chicago Latino Film
Festival. Call 281-4114 or 431-
1330 for more information. 151
W. Fullerton. Tix \$5.

Pipers Alley: 9th Annual Chicago Latino Film Festival. Call 642-7500 or 431-1330 for more information. 1608 N. Wells.

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BLUES FOR BEGINNERS

Part One: A Guide to the North Side

by Johnny Bergin

Poking Through the Rubble

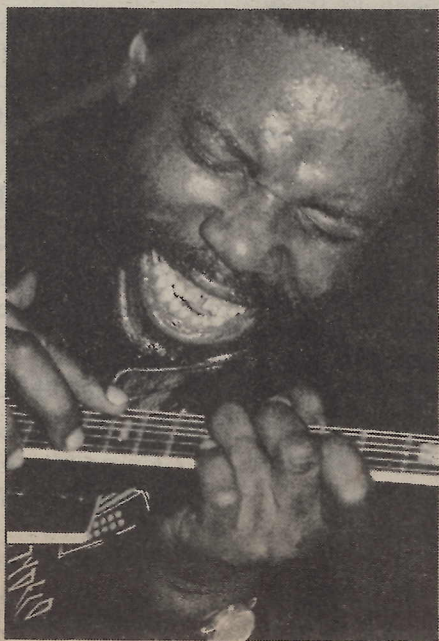
The much-lauded Chicago blues scene is in reality just the aftermath of a true cultural and musical explosion. The Chicago blues heyday was a period from the 40's through the 60's, when the waves of southern Blacks migrating to Chicago created, developed, and supported the Chicago blues sound. Today the music and the legacy of Chicago blues reach more people than ever, but the historical and cultural forces that created them and made them great are gone. The audience has changed from a concentrated, intense and loyal Black following to a mixed, world-wide audience, whose attitudes range from scholarly and detached to hedonistic. The music and its context have changed too—from a vibrant, living folk music to a much more mixed bag. One can listen to CDs of real urban bluesmen in front of screaming Japanese or Swedish fans or go up to North Halsted to hear the postmodern garble of a cynical, tourist-based industry. (Shirley King singing "Proud Mary" would surely fit this latter category).

The story of the rise and fall of Chicago blues is too complicated for me to go into in this article. For a history of the real Chicago blues scene I suggest Mike Rowe's book *Chicago Blues*. I'll just say that despite the fact that Chicago blues is basically at the end of the road, there's still a lot of great blues music to be heard. Urban blues as a folk music still exists, out of step with the rest of the world, and it pops up in the oddest places. So you can still have a good time hopping from joint to joint, learning about Chicago and the pageant of Black music. You can still go out and see a good blues artist, or a great one. And Sweet Home Chicago's still got more of them crammed together in a bustling city than any other corner of the globe.

This article, the first in a series, is a quick rundown of some of the blues clubs and blues artists of the North Side. This list, incomplete as it is, will concentrate on Chicago artists even though one of the best things about Chicago is the incredible number of great out-of-town artists passing through. I hope that by this focus I can give a sense of how rich this city is even in the much-faded aftermath of the Chicago blues heyday.

The North Side

The North Side has gone through a lot of changes lately. One of the longest lasting clubs, **Wise Fool's**, has been renamed and turned into a sports bar, while other aggressive new clubs and restaurants with



Chicago bluesmen ply their trade. Clockwise from top: Willie Kent, Otis Rush, and Lurrie C. Bell

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUSAN GREENBERG

different bookings and atmospheres have opened. For better or worse they are making the long-standing hegemony of Lincoln Avenue a thing of the past. **Brother Jimmy's** (at 2909 N. Sheffield), has recently featured great blues acts such as **James Cotton**, ex Muddy guitarist **Bob Margolin**, and long-time Chicago blues singer, harp man and entertainer **Eddie Burks**. Even better, it charges a very low cover. It has an campy, Southern frat-house atmosphere that's not for everyone but is sure to be something you've never experienced before unless you've been to Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The **Dixie Que** restaurant at Damen and Fullerton (another joint with a pronounced Southern fetish) has also featured interesting blues acts like **Jookin' Jake**, a fine country blues style guitarist with a country/rockabilly style. He's backed by a harp, washboard, and string bass combo. **Shaw's Crab House** at 21 E. Hubbard is a rather ritzy restaurant that sometimes features the witty, swinging singer **Barkin' Bill** with crack band **The Undertakers**.

The North Side is a good place to go for professional and out of town acts. There are many acts which play most of the main clubs every weekend: **Lonnie Brooks**, **Son Seals**, **The Kinsey Report**, **Jimmy Johnson**, **Big Time Sarah**. These are some of the most successful, funk and rock influenced, modern blues bands. All are on Alligator records, the blues label with the most clout in town, and all are stamped with the easily recognizable Alligator "house-rockin'" sound—a rock- and funk-oriented, radio friendly blast mixed for the car stereo. To my ears they're all a little uninteresting. One final word: carding is pervasive. For example, don't even try to go to B.L.U.E.S. or any other joint in the neighborhood if you're underage. Stick to the restaurants and places off the beaten track and trust to your luck.

Kingston Mines at 2548 N. Halsted is the top dog of the North Side. Exactly identical music is played on two stages, till 4 a.m. weekdays and 5 a.m. Saturdays. Long lines of tourists, suburbanites and just plain folks form every weekend, while the celebrities—the biggest boon to the tourist industry, of course—just hop out of their limos and are unctuously ushered in. Inside they're hailed by the musicians and by "Doc" Pelligrino, the heavyset blues bossman and owner. The first time I visited there I saw noted folklorist George Thoroughgood sitting at the bar. The Mines and **The Checkerboard**, out of all the clubs in Chicago, have most effectively exploited the boost that celebrities give to any tourist establishment.

Music-wise, North Side clubs like the Mines and **Blue Chicago** rely almost exclusively on a select stable of highly professional artists. They strut around Chicago like made Mafia men. Much of their music is honed to the point where all feeling is gone; what is left is designed purely for maximum audience masturbation. The only truly great blues artist that plays at Kingston Mines is **Otis Rush**, but he's not to be missed. One of the all time great guitarists and singers, Otis Rush wrenches your heart out with slow blues and stuns with the same sheer power that you hear on his legendary recordings on the Cobra label. There are a few other exceptions to the general rule of polished mediocrity at the Mines. The very talented **Eddie Clearwater** (a lefty who can bend notes uncannily like Rush or Albert King) puts on a fine blues variety show there between lengthy international tours. **Micheal Coleman**, successor of Matt Murphy in the James Cotton band, knocks out audiences with his versatility on his instrument. Finally, the regular weekend headliner **A.C. Reed** is an artist far above the rest: his distinctive voice, perfect comic timing, and lowdown sax

playing are always a treat. Despite this handful of fine performers, I can't abide the sordid atmosphere of the two Blue Chicago clubs (one's on State and the other's on Clark) and the Mines. These clubs are running neck and neck for the title of number-one souvenir stand in Chicago.

B.L.U.E.S. (2519 N. Halsted) and **B.L.U.E.S. Etc.** (1124 W. Belmont): Cozy north side joints, the main neighborhood competitors with Kingston Mines. They get my vote for the best bookings and best atmosphere of the neighborhood, though the competition is tough. Many of Chicago's delights can be found here, as well as many musicians sitting in or just hanging out. For example, **Little Smokey Smothers** has had his monthly night for quite a while now. One of the cleanest, most sophisticated, and most powerful pickers in Chicago, Smokey is a guitar player's dream. He's also a savvy entertainer with a puckish sense of humor and a new wisecrack for every occasion. **Roosevelt "Booba" Barnes**, who's active in other clubs as well, also has a regular night at B.L.U.E.S. Booba Barnes is a bizarre fireball of a performer who both picks the box and blows the harp in his wild, naive, and inimitable way. He's only recently up from the rough juke joints of Clarksdale, Mississippi, where he had a Black following and owned a club for a time. His style really hasn't changed much, so despite his lack of taste (which is part of the fun anyway), he's really worth seeing.

T-Bone Walker style guitarist **Floyd McDaniel** (who can sometimes be found at jazz clubs) often holds down a Sunday or two. He's a fine singer and player with an offbeat, swing oriented repertoire. His band features some of the best horn men in blues reading actual charts on the bandstand (a unique sight on a blues stage) and the fantastic **Hindu Henderson** beating the skins.

Weekends at B.L.U.E.S., you might possibly hear Otis Rush, or you could get a good out of town act like **Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson**, **Lonnie Mack**, or Blues Brothers and Memphis Slim guitarist **Matt Murphy**. The fine Texas picker **Anson Funderberg** sometimes puts in an appearance at B.L.U.E.S. Etc. Usually, though, they have the same mediocre Alligator or Alligator-type acts which dominate the rest of the North Side and also stake out a good corner of the national market. Surely the most down home and musically rewarding of these acts are **Magic Slim and the Tear Drops** and the raucous and fun **Little Ed and the Blues Imperials**.

Lilly's on 2513 N. Lincoln is a pleasant place to hear bands that usually only play on **Maxwell Street** (such as **Iceman Perkins** or **Willie James and the Maxwell Street Blues Band**) or on the West Side. **Willie Kent and the Gents**, a very solid band which works all over the North Side but which has a pronounced West Side feel, could also be the weekend band here. If you like to hear the funkiest, crudest, and most stripped down ghetto bands in a setting that won't make you nervous, the weekend bands at Lilly's will often do you fine. The low down and funky guitarist **Johnny B. Moore** often plays there on weekends. Moore is a true product of the West Side who's gritty, intense, and able to play any song a Black audience might demand, from Muddy Waters tunes, played with a slide, to Tyrone Davis and Bobby Bland. You can also usually hear this great guitar player on Thursdays at one of the Blue Chicagos.

Buddy Guy's Legends, 754 S. Wabash: You can hear some of the top blues bands in the country here, including ones who rarely play Chicago gigs except for festivals—Chicago expatriates **Hubert Sumlin** and **Robert Jr. Lockwood**, Texan **Clarence Gatemouth Brown**, West Coast

continued on page 14

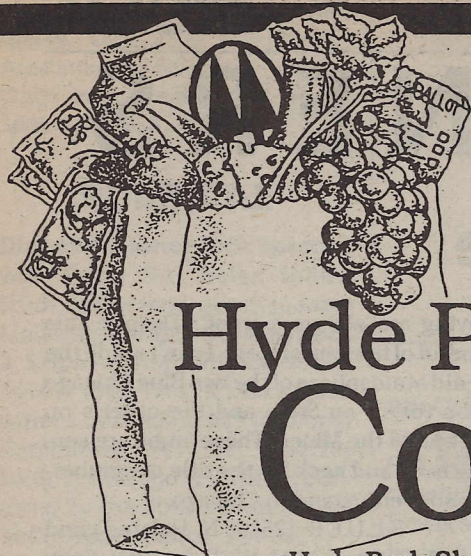


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The Evergreen:

All members receive a subscription to the Co-op newsletter, *The Evergreen*, mailed to their home. The *Evergreen* includes articles of interest to consumers, recipes and nutrition information, news from the Co-op and special member-only food coupons.

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Many Hyde Park businesses give special discounts to Co-op members. Participating stores are listed in the *Evergreen*. Co-op must present their Co-op membership card in order to receive the discount.

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Co-op members are invited to join the United Credit Union, which has a branch office on the lower level of our store. By depositing \$100, members have access to a variety of financial services.

Input into Co-op policies:

As a member/owner of the Co-op you have a voice—equal to all other members—in how the Co-op runs. Opportunities for the participation are numerous. All suggestions put into the suggestion box are answered promptly. Members are invited and encouraged to participate on committees, run for the board, and attend annual meetings. The Co-op also employs a full-time member services director available to assist members in taking advantage of opportunities for participation.

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Unlike most shoppers at most grocery stores, Co-op member/owners have an impact on the operation of the store. Members are invited to serve on Co-op committees that implement store policy and work on programs to educate shoppers. Co-op members elect a board of directors that oversees business operations. The co-op is truly a community-oriented, democratically-controlled, business.

The Hyde Park Co-op has long been in the forefront of educating consumers about food and nutrition. In the 1960s, the Co-op was the first grocery store in the country to introduce unit pricing. A brigade of co-op member/volunteers pioneered the price-per-pound program that later became the standard for the grocery industry.

Today, our member/volunteers are still working for consumer education in the store. The Co-op's Consumer Information Committee, which is open to all members, meets monthly to plan programs. The committee works on programs to educate consumers on health and nutrition issues.

The Co-op also has an Environmental Concerns Committee, and a Membership/Education Committee. The ECC works to educate members about issues relating to shopping habits and their environmental impact. The Membership/Education committee is responsible for overseeing events like the Annual Meeting and the Book Sale, and also plans regular programs about issues of interest to Co-op members.

Any member who is interested in getting more involved with the Co-op is encouraged to serve on a committee. Call the Co-op, 667-1444, to find out the date of the next committee meeting that interests you.

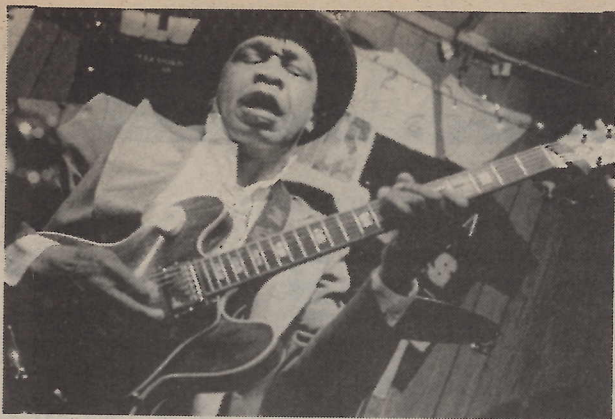
October is National Co-op Month

All over the United States, Co-ops celebrate their history and connection with special events throughout the month of October.

The Hyde Park Co-op will host a number of events this October. Among them is the 39th Annual Co-op Book Sale, on October 9, 10, & 11, 9:30 am - 6:00 pm. This sale offers over 20,000 used books at fabulous prices. The books are all donated by Co-op and community members. There is something for everyone—from Shakespeare to romance novels. Proceeds from the sale benefit cooperative education and development, and local non-profit groups.

There will also be a New Member Orientation on Tuesday, October 19 at 7:00 pm. This orientation is designed to give new members a basic understanding of the Co-op, its history, and guiding principles. Participants receive a Co-op gift certificate, and tour of all the back rooms of the store. Spaces are limited, so call and reserve your space today!





Little Smokey Smothers

and the Legendary Blues Band featuring the great ex Muddy Waters drummer Willie Smith.

Rosa's, at 3420 W. Armitage, is not on the NorthSide, but is big enough to compete with the North Side pack and features many of the same artists. Rosa's had unfortunate licensing problems over the summer but thankfully is back on track now. The atmosphere

SUSAN GREENBERG

is great, the drink prices are a little lower than up North, and the imaginative and off-beat bookings help keep Chicago interesting when not much else out of the ordinary is happening. Some of the bands which have their home base there are about as far from the poetry and art of Chicago blues as you can get, even if they're quite talented musicians. A perfect example of this kind of blues is **Melvin Taylor and the Slack Band**. On the positive side **Little Smokey** as well as great guitar player and former expatriate **Eddie C. Campbell** have often been featured, and great piano players **Sunnylad Slim** and **Pinetop Perkins**, **Mississippi Heat** with great guitar player **Billy Flynn**, and many fine but obscure artists have had a night at Rosa's as well. But probably the most exciting artist who can regularly be seen here is **Lurrie Bell**. Lurrie's playing is at once purely imaginative and purely traditional—it has to be heard to be believed. His breakneck tempo and exhilarating shuffles swing hard, combining a little Gatemouth Brown, a little T-Bone, a little B.B. and a whole lot of Albert King. Sometimes his playing and singing collapse into chaos but the chance of that happening just makes his performances that much more exciting. So get down to Rosa's and hear Lurrie for yourself.

This is just a partial list of blues acts and venues in just one part of our city. Stay tuned next week for a guide to blues on the South Side and West Side.

continued from page 11

bands like **Rod Piazza** and the **Mighty Fliers** and **Little Charlie and the Nightcats**, **Bobby Radcliffe**, **Duke Robillard**, **Snooks Eaglin**, and others. I would love to talk about all of these bands but for now I'll just tell you to go see them. Naturally the other main attraction is the frequent presence of **Buddy Guy** himself. If he's not mingling with the crowd or sitting at the bar sipping at top-shelf whiskey, his presence is still established by gigantic framed photographs, blown up from *Rolling Stone*, of his smiling, lion-like face and even his ring-bedecked fingers. And you can't get away from Eric Clapton's faux holiness and Stevie Ray Vaughan's pasty mug, upturned in ecstasy as he sweats over his Strat. The room is redolent with MTV style self-reference, show-biz egomania and rock and roll necrophilia.

However you feel about the decor, **Buddy Guy's** has some of the more interesting bookings in Chicago, and is a good place to catch Chicago bluesmen and acts that you can't always see elsewhere. Examples include **Big Daddy Kinsey** (a fine, older, Muddy-styled slide player and singer), **Dave Meyers** (whose guitar playing was on many of the great Little Walter songs as well as early Junior Wells), the **Ice Cream Men** with great guitarist **Jimmy Lee Robinson**,

R A P C I T Y

The Day the Hip Hop Died

by JP Chill

"That kill the white devil shit, that's for white kids. If you want to shock black people say 'Fuck Martin Luther King' or 'Fuck Malcolm X and Farrakhan.'"

— LL Cool J

The summer of '93. The summer everyone realized that hip hop died about three years ago.

Ever since The Sugarhill Gang's "Rappers Delight" in 1979 people have said rap is a fad, that it wouldn't last. When Grandmaster Flash's "The Message" crossed over, when Run-DMC teamed up with Aerosmith, when Vanilla Ice and MC Hammer went multi-platinum, people said "It's gotten too big, it's gonna play out." But what most people didn't foresee was *how* rap would die. It didn't just fade away like acid house. Instead, rap got the jazz/rock-n-roll/blues treatment.

What killed rap was its crossover appeal—but not in the Jazzy Jeff or Hammer sense of replacing anything street with happy, innocuous lyrics and making the music less noisy. Rap expanded beyond the core of fans who appreciated lyrics and lyrical styles, most of whom were MC's, DJ's, graffiti writers and breakdancers themselves. But rather than crossing over by going soft, it has become "hardcore" to the point of being cartoonish and overblown—black heavy metal.

Missing is what makes rap unique: lyrical skills. The music is dope as ever now that producers are long past reusing another tired James Brown loop. Some have incorporated jazz and even live instruments. But without creative, skillful lyrics, rap is no different from any other pop music.

The elements that are crowding out skillz have been in rap from its first days on wax—the guns ("...like a .357, we're out to kill." Funky Four + 1, 1981), the sexism, the black-on-black violence, the drug imagery. But they were not the focus—lyrical skills were. Since about 1989, what MC's are rhyming has become much more important than whether or not they are saying things in a vivid and compelling way. Take away Onyx's guns and black-on-black violence—or most other gangsta rappers'—and you're left with very little lyrically. Take the same things away from the Funky Four + 1, BDP's *Criminal Minded*, or Ultramagnetic MC's *Critical Beatdown* and what remains are still amazing, creative, dope lyrics.

In 1987 Chuck D said that rap was the CNN of black youth, that through rap black youth communicated their condition to each other and the rest of Amerikkka. Today, rap has become the Hard Copy/Current Affair/Cops of black youth, designed for quick sale to people looking for a "real ghetto experience." Back then Chuck D also said "Rap is rock and roll because of attitude." I wonder if he knew how much truer that statement would be today. Rap has indeed become rock and roll: music for suburban kids who are mad at their parents.

In underground hip hop magazines like the *One Nut Network* and at the New Music Seminar, record company people and the artists themselves point out that the people who really appreciate MC's with skills don't buy much product. A group of friends might each buy one tape or CD and then dub copies from each other, or buy bootleg tapes (which are more easily available in the large cities where the true listeners live). So there is an increasing number of suburban fans buying the shoot-em-up-bitches-ain't-shit-drinkin'-40's-and-smokin-blunts cd's and tapes, and there's a shrinking core of b-boys 'n girls who know skills when they hear them but don't have the ends to buy tapes.

Even the anti-white sentiment of some rap is exploited for crossover potential. The theology and cosmology of various religious sects like the 5% Nation, the Ansaars, or the Nubian Islamic Hebrews have long been part of the poetic imagery of rap (for instance Eric B & Rakim from "My Melody" on), primarily intended for members of those groups. Recently, West Coast rappers have focused on one doctrine of these groups, the white-man-as-devil theme, thereby taking "hardcore" to another meaningless, and very marketable, extreme. After hearing Da Lench Mob's album, LL Cool J said "That kill the white devil shit, that's for white kids. That's not shocking to black people. If you want to shock black people say 'Fuck Martin Luther King' or 'Fuck Malcolm X and Farrakhan.'"

It's certainly true that "savage rap", as RegNoc, a member of the late great Dem Dare, calls it, has great popularity among black as well as white rap consumers. Since the first NWA and Eazy E records in 1986 the West Coast gangsta rappers gradually increased their share of the rap market while the East Coast hip hop community paid no attention. What eventually forced them to take notice, directly and indirectly, was the massive increase in sales to whites. Yo MTV Raps brought rap to the suburbs, and sales skyrocketed. MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice came and went without much influence on the music itself. But soon after, rap releases went from dozens of small, independent record labels to labels owned by one of the five major multinational record companies.

With big record companies come big budgets for promotions, videos, etc. In return, the companies expect big numbers. Sales of a hit gangsta rap album are in the millions, while many highly respected MC's sell a tenth of that, not enough for the big labels. The result is that a lot of MC's with real skills leave their original audience behind and cross over by adopting violent lyrics and images, screaming "No sellout!" all the way. Compare the two Brand Nubian tapes, or the new Poor Righteous Teachers single to their earlier work.

The shift is more extreme for groups just starting out: they know exactly what's expected of them. Those who don't make the move pay for it. If you ask any serious rap fan, Lord Finesse had, musically and lyrically, one of the strongest LP's last year. But he didn't sell a fourth as many records as any of a dozen cartoon gangsta rappers, so it's likely he won't have another record.

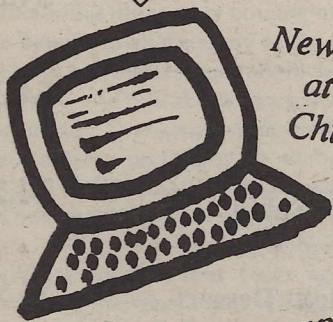
Some hip hop magazines like *The Source*, which once had pretensions to authenticity, refuse to acknowledge that the empower's not wearing any clothes. Yet, from the *One Nut Network's* editorial about how hip hop is over while the business of selling rap product is going strong, to Danyel Smith's and dream hampton's melancholy, always on point meditations on hip hop culture in Spin's "Dreaming America" column, it is finally agreed. Rap has crossed over and no amount of nostalgia will bring it back.

All this is not to say that rap doesn't still have more to say than 99% of current popular music. There are still people, and lots of them in this city, who are making funky, funky hip hop music. You just have to look harder to find 'em.

One place to start is at the A. C. club (3301 N. Milwaukee at Pulaski), which will feature **The Beatnuts** at the first of its weekly hip hop shows tonight at 9pm. Some Chicago crews including **Stony Island** will be opening and I'll be hosting...In a summer without a real hip hop anthem, **Dirty Rotten Scoundrels** featuring **Jehru the Damager** was the underground record of the summer here...The new **Ultramagnetics** tape is all that & two brothers with checks. Peace out.

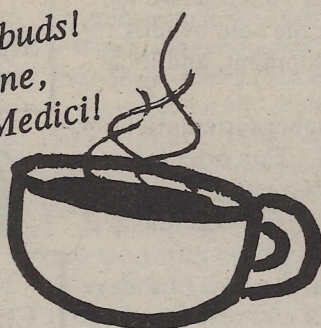


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FEW DIE OF HEARTBREAK

Or, Why I Am the Best Rock Critic In Chicago.

by Ken Kurson

I don't know why they call it heartbreak because for me it's in the lungs. That gasping choke when you don't get the love you deserve for having once been a sweet child, for having once thought the world was safe and your parents would protect you. It's never a movie cry where one perfectly formed teardrop nobly parades down your cheek. It's the kind where you know how ugly you look, how pitiful and pathetic, just when you most need to seem strong. ...*I knew a little girl once, I knew a guy she knew once, too. They had a heart in common, I didn't think it'd ever break in two.* This is the story of Duke and Piston.

Jean Harris. The spurned bassist who tried out for the Lilacs and then bombed his girlfriend's neighbor. Sol Wachtler, can you just see him, 60-something and sending condoms to his ex's teen daughter. Brazilian cuckolds, for whom it isn't even illegal. Amy Fisher, Glenn Close in Fatal Attraction and Dido and Orpheus. People do all kinds of crazy stuff because of heartbreak, but few die of it. When Piston came over, a warm and summer night when the shit was going down, she fought bravely. She clung to absurd intellectualizations, trying to stuff a ton of cry into a fifty-pound idea bag. So when, a few days later, I heard that sweet refrain, "Kenny, you were totally right the other night," not even I could gloat.

That's what I mean about the lungs. It's not about companionship or sex or history or even love. It's not that they saw the best of you and picked someone else. It's the opposite, really. It's that they saw the worst of you, the weakest, most desperate moments, the private moments you swore would never show. Then they picked someone else. They saw the fright and let you shiver. It's not that they didn't love you. It's that you let them see the secret stuff and it wasn't enough to endear you to them forever.

Then slowly you get over it, wondering the whole time if your recovered ability to laugh proves that you're shallow. I really should brood more, make a scene, slash some tires, make crank calls. The realization that you can get over the kind of pain you thought you'd never know means you can get over anything. That makes you feel numb. Or sometimes, if you're like me and you are a brooder, the type who combs every minute and

wonders about the clues and the signals, if you're like that, sometimes you got to be snapped out of it. Something happens that makes you ashamed to be self-absorbed, because if Elie Wiesel can still make pretty books and Mike Tyson studies for his GED, who the hell are you kidding with all this moping jive. It grates on your friends, too, the way it does when a white person uses words like jive. So if you're lucky, something snaps you out of it, loans some perspective.

Perspective is funny that way. I'm rather tall and when I wake up in the morning I sometimes look at my feet all the way down at the other end of the bed. I smile and feel reassured that I take up so much space in the world. Then I wander into the street and am dwarfed by the trains and hustle and stylish people, and that's what I mean by perspective. That crash of focus when it becomes clear your problems are not going to kill you after all and you no longer want them to, either. For me it came when my best friend's dad, a strapping hiker of just forty-two, was eaten by bears. I went to the funeral, ex in tow, and knew that I was over the hump. There'd be more bad days but no more bad months.

Those of you who follow my career know that I've paid homage, in song and right here in print, to my dear friend Jennifer. *She had perfect lips, and eyes like a true child.* It took me a long time to believe that I put the kind of hurt on her that was put on me. Now I believe her. But don't feel too sorry for her, at least not yet, because she's not the kind of woman whom the world allows to be lonely for long. She is a fighter and a survivor, an exterior shelled well enough to protect some rather delicate insides.

Jennifer's mother died today. Or was it yesterday. She was a delightful woman and when I tell you that she was orphaned and raised by nuns you'll probably think I'm fooling. She reared five strong children and one adorable lug of policeman husband in a small but very endearing ethnic house. One time I went into the kitchen and she showed me the morning paper, hoping I'd notice her Letter to the Editor. When I headed straight for Sports she could wait no longer and told me to look at page so-and-so but wouldn't tell me why. If you could have seen her beam when I noticed her letter, you'd know why

it's sad when a nice person dies, no matter how painlessly or old. Bev LaPorte's death did more than prove that consuming nothing besides cigarettes, Scotch and Little Debbie's actually does accelerate the inevitable. It proved that it's hard to love someone when you know that their eventual exit from your life will almost ruin you.

Now Jennifer and Piston are in the same boat. They will both recover and they will both feel something like guilty for it. It's part of healing. They are good people and they deserve that kind of investment again. There really isn't all that much else out there.

I went to the movies last Friday. I tagged along with a threesome kind enough to include me. Back only a week, I missed New York already and could see myself one day calling it home. For now, though, I was at the beautiful Music Box, scene of a good percentage of my A+, all-time, totally excellent Chicago evenings. I've had a low-level crush on my inviter for nearly two years, but I was distracted and self-conscious and all my instincts were off. If things were different who knows but even a clumsy-pawed oaf like me could see that both of our hearts were far away, deeply mired in distant grad schools and probably surrounded by fawning nubile with intense eyes and smart things to say.

People can tell when you're liking them for reasons other than those for which they want to be liked. So I see a dazzlingly bright, electrically charged young woman, one who has carefully developed an opinion on just about everything. Beneath it, she's as unsure as the rest of us and if one listens close, one can tell she's been high-school stung by tepid boys with words like bossy and "too smart

to be sexy." It's as endearing as it is predictable that she's only attracted to much older men, teachers, really. Though I'm not half as smart, I am, of course, pretty darn old and she probably wants me to think she's sophisticated. I do, but I think I missed the point because mostly I just think it's sweet how she talks too much and too loud. I like her for that. Probably, the grotesque caterpillar I've been wearing on my lip didn't help.

It's two years since I'm naked on the floor and wished my lungs would cooperate when I asked them not to breathe. I drink so much Nyquil that I rarely dream but I remember one from *February made me shiver*, around the Leap day so it must have been ninety-two. I wake up screaming and sweating, "Don't you fucking lie to me! Don't you fucking lie to me!" Goddam if there isn't an angel right there, for me and for real, who takes the words right out of my belly. "I will never hurt you. I will never hurt you. I will never..."

That I could start the new year, something like 5754, with a plateful of plans, a wide eyed gaze, that's what I'm talking about. When I promised my friend that she, too, would soon be able to laugh and breathe again, I reminded her that the heart is a very resilient organ. She said she already knew that but what could I tell her about the liver. Already back, already firing zingers. Today I say goodbye to Chicago for the first time in my life. Goodbye to my beloved Rök World and goodbye to all that I know and trust. It's for stories like these that *The Grey City Journal*—this dream-come-true, TV-movie, buncha college friends started a newspaper—pays me the large dollars. And that's why I'm the best rock critic in Chicago. ■

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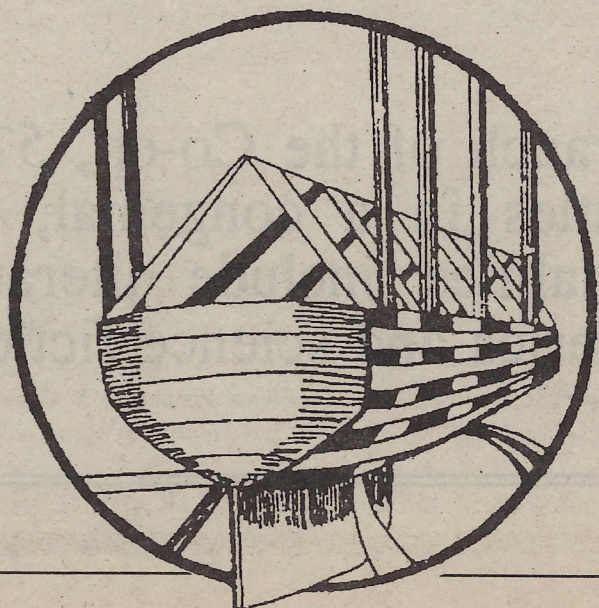
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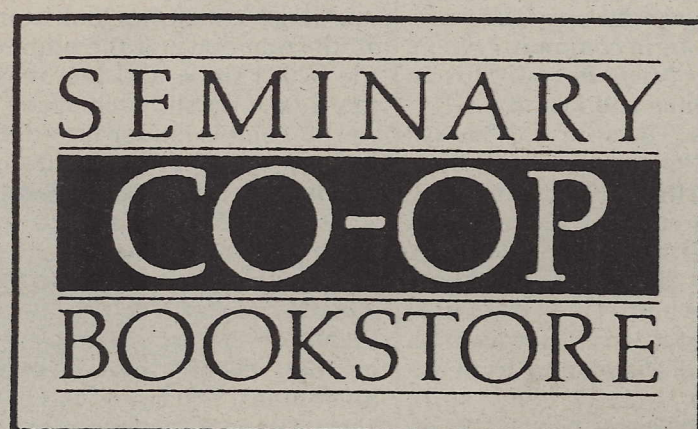
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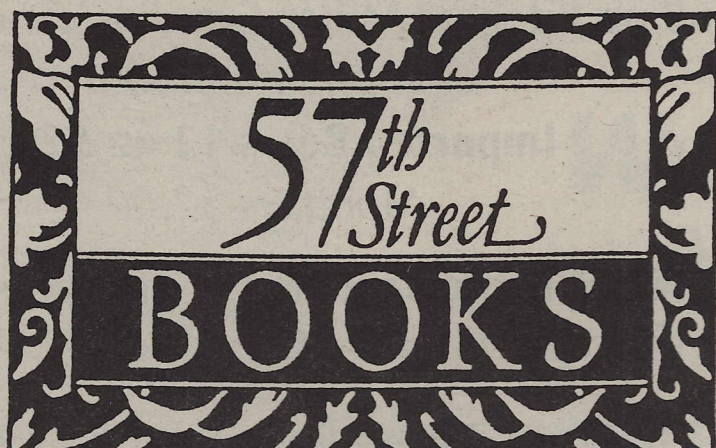
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Nothing Succeeds Like Excess

by Paul Boisvert

Hard Target
Directed by John Woo

The trend in American movies towards increasingly spectacular and implausible violence has reached a culmination of sorts in John Woo's *Hard Target*. Featuring Jean-Claude Van Damme and hundreds of thousands of bullets, the film is one of a lengthening series of cartoon-like action pictures, each of which tries to surpass the previous ones in the depiction of continuously escalating and completely unbelievable sequences of destruction. The absurdity and unreality of the presentation of violence in these films both mirrors and contributes to the growing brutality and intellectual degradation of American society.

There is nothing wrong with graphic and disturbing scenes of violence in movies *per se*. A successful work of art will reflect and comment upon the underlying realities of a society, which in America unfortunately means a system of economic, interpersonal, and cultural relations based upon a substrate of violent domination of the many by the few. Conceived in genocide, war, slavery, and oppression of women, and economically based on capitalist coercion that gives people a choice between dangerous jobs or starvation for their children, the US continues to be saturated with physical and spiritual violence. A responsible and serious filmmaker will naturally attempt to shock, disturb and awaken her audience, and the portrayal of the real and horrifying violence that pervades life in the US is a legitimate and valuable tool to such an end.

It is foolish to blame violence in movies for *causing* violence in America, when our society refuses to seriously address poverty, drug abuse, unemployment, racism, sexism, and the other real causes of violence. When the government routinely resorts to invasion and bombing civilians to settle minor foreign policy disputes, and civic culture encourages rabid interest in boxing, football, and hunting, it is pointless

to blame the messenger when movies merely reflect our murderous image back at us.

The problem is that in films like *Hard Target* the carnage serves not to make us think about the profoundly violent world around us, but rather becomes a technical display of stunts, choreography, editing, and one-upsmanship that elicits nothing but curiosity as to what inventive mode of death will come next, and how inevitably anticlimactic the final demise of the villain will be. When one sees two men run along parallel courses 10 feet apart while continuously blasting away at each other with semi-automatic weapons for 5 or 6 seconds, and both come through *completely unscathed*, one cannot take any of it seriously. But long before this scene takes place the lone hero of *Hard Target* has already survived incredible assaults by teams of men with unlimited firepower in what begins to resemble old Roadrunner cartoons. By the time we get to the point-blank shoot-out, the continual violence has become so numbing and boring that one can only burst out laughing at the sheer absurdity of it.

In real life, even modest drive-by shootings, involving maybe five or ten shots, can result in an innocent person, sometimes a child, being maimed or killed. Real violence takes place in the home and on the streets when we walk to the grocery store. The function of movies like *Cliffhanger*, *Die Hard*, *Under Siege*, and *Hard Target* is to remove violence from this emotionally involving context of everyday life and place it in exotic locations: in the mountains, in a high-rise office building, on a ship, or in a bayou. Once physically insulated, the bloodshed is then inflated to gargantuan proportions, implicitly conveying the message that violence is something to be experienced as an unrealistic, vicarious thrill that can be watched with impunity and in which good guys finish first (emphasis on *guys*—the female companions and accomplices are used to demonstrate the evil of the villain, which usually means at least being wounded).

The glorification of unnecessary violence is actually not the most disheartening aspect of these films. Rather, it is the

total and utter absence of anything else worth looking at; the violence constitutes the entire film. John Woo is famous for making incredibly violent movies, but even in his acclaimed *The Killer*, where the violence is even more numbing than in *Hard Target*, there is at least a moderately interesting (if incredibly sentimental) story to follow, and some genuine interaction between the protagonists. While confused and flawed, *The Killer* at least has elements to make one think about the *meaning* of all this violence, including an implicit critique—the protagonist is trying to *quit* being a hitman.

However trite and formulaic these other elements in *The Killer* seem to us, there is a strong sense in the movie that at least Woo himself takes them somewhat seriously.

Recent American action films, however, have seemingly given up any attempt to be anything other than live-action videogames. The heroes are not even actors, in the cases of Scharzenegger, Seagal, and Van Damme—the Van Damme of *Hard Target* makes Robocop look like an Olivier. Likewise, the scripts are hardly credible writing: not only the overall stories, but virtually every single plot twist in those stories, ring false—continuity is non-existent, the characters' behavior is utterly unmotivated, and individual scenes often contain childishly implausible and contradictory developments. The combined lack of acting and writing make it hard to attribute blame: many of the real actors are atrociously bad, although in the case of some of the more accomplished ones it is probably the screenplay that is at fault.

To take just one example, in *Hard Target* Wilford Brimley plays Van Damme's lovable, eccentric uncle, who rides through the bayou on a horse shooting villains with a bow and arrow, all with a Cajun accent from Mars. At one point, in an enclosed warehouse filled with gun-blasting killers who are stalking them, Brimley and the inevitable helpless-female-companion obliviously take about 12 seconds to have a loud debate about whether she should have a gun, while the rest of the warehouse is *utterly silent*. The fact that the villains can easily hear and locate them is simply ignored. What's worse is the immediate cut

to an apparently *simultaneous* shot of Van Damme, who is in the *midst* of an ongoing (noisy) shoot-out within 30 or 40 feet of the other two.

Woo, acclaimed for being a superlative technical director—for making the guns sound and look real, for having a poetic and stylized cinematographic look to his films—finds this level of sophistication unnecessary for an American film. For an American audience, it seems that he couldn't care less how imbecilic the framework of the movie is, even to the point of atrocious gaps in editing and continuity.

There is no evidence that Woo takes anything seriously in the film other than the staged violent set pieces, which are mere exercises in the pornography of stunts. The film's nominal plot contains potentially serious social commentary, depicting as it does evil rich white men who hunt homeless people for sport. Woo undercuts this completely, however, by the quick removal of the action from the streets of New Orleans to the bayou, where there are no more homeless people, just rugged martial artists and crotchety bow-shooting woodsmen. The love for and fascination with pure violence displayed by Woo's film (as by so many other movies today) vitiates the professed social and political concerns halfheartedly offered to the shell-shocked viewer.

Violence even crowds out other forms of *prurient* interest. There is no romance or sex in *Hard Target*, because the violence is itself so blatantly sexualized. From the opening scene in which a phallic arrow flies along in slow-motion to the final scene in which Van Damme kills the chief bad guy by dropping a hand grenade down his pants into his crotch (we are given several moments of *anticipation* waiting for that ultimate orgasm), violence means sexual excitement. We also get lots of motorcycle riding, kicks in the balls, bullets to the groin, and ever-longer guns coming into play, as the men go about the serious business of proving whose is bigger and better. Woo is aware of and deliberately plays up this aspect—it's fun to watch how it is used more or less cleverly along the way—but he makes nothing of it and does nothing with it. That male violence has a sexual connection is true; it's obvious five minutes into this film. There is nothing else in the film that might relate to, or resonate with, or be illuminated by this insight, however, because Woo is too busy wallowing in sexualized violence to say anything serious about it.

Violence is one way that all but the most cartoon-like in movies is expunged, but it is not just violent films in America that increasingly resemble Loony Tunes: *all* types of films are populated more and more with utterly unconvincing, unrealistic, and idiotic people and situations that don't even make sense within the context of the films themselves, let alone in terms of real people's lives and concerns. From prototypes like the live-action cartoons *Roger Rabbit* and *Cool World*, to popular drug-fantasies like *Pretty Woman* and *Ghost*, film after film offers absolutely nothing of intellectual substance to viewers. This is not to say that there isn't a place for escapist films: I will watch *Arsenic and Old Lace* over *Citizen Kane* any day. I watched Saturday morning cartoons until an age I won't reveal here, and it never hurt me—today I'm wildly successful with an income in 5 figures.

Films today, however, completely lack internal consistency; their only attraction to viewers is the glorification of ever-more horrific and meaningless violence. For this, one has to criticize writers, directors, producers, and the mega-corporations they work for. They exemplify the general problem of the media in this country: that billions of dollars are spent on brain-numbing garbage that encourages us to passively accept an illogical violent world, while at the same time, money is sorely needed for pressing social needs. In an entertainment industry dominated by large corporations, it is a struggle to overcome the Van Dammes and free both our money and our minds for better things. ■

~~ANATOMY~~
~~ANATOMY~~

~~MICROBIOLOGY~~
~~MICROBIOLOGY~~

~~CHEMISTRY~~
~~CHEMISTRY~~

~~PHYSICS~~
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Eloquence comes easily at the Stephen Douglas

South Side Guide

continued from back page

hated Kansas-Nebraska act that brought war between the wild-eyed, gun-toting abolitionists of Kansas and invading slave-holders from Missouri. His speeches during the famous debates with Lincoln are filled with race-baiting, because apparently that was just as sure-fire a way to beat a liberal in 1856 as it is now. Douglas had the grace to die at the very start of the Civil War, and it is also fitting that his monument, built on the grounds of his former estate, is now surrounded by a vast ghetto.

Almost nobody ever visits the Douglas tomb, but it's definitely worth a stop. The monument is surrounded by a tall wrought-iron fence, and is wildly overbuilt. I had no idea that Senators and failed presidential nominees were eligible for such elaborate memorials (where are the ones for Bryan or LaFollette?), but no expense was spared for Douglas. The monument is a smaller version of the gigantic phalluses of European cities, with a statue of Douglas elevated about fifty feet by an enormous column, and surrounded with tableaux of his life's achievements. One of these illustrates the real secret of Douglas' success, which was imparted to me by the groundskeeper: the guy owned all the land from the Loop to Indiana, and was one of the owners of the Illinois Central railroad. Four of the classically-featured allegorical female figures that were apparently mandatory in Victorian monuments repose at each corner of the monument; one represents "Eloquence." Douglas is buried inside.

The Douglas monument is tricky to find by automobile, since all of the roads in that area are blocked off or one-way, and there are of course no signs. Try exiting Lake Shore Drive at 31st Street and wandering southward. You can also glimpse the "little debater" from Lake Shore Drive as you race past, standing in his characteristic declamatory pose and surveying the ruins and high-rises and rusting railroad tracks of his former estate from atop a column.

My other favorite monument in Chicago is equally forgotten and inaccessible, although you can find pictures of it in tour guides from before 1968. It is the memorial to the police killed at the infamous Haymarket incident in 1888, when cops began to break up an anarchist assembly and someone (it was never discovered who) threw a bomb. The tragic encounter enraged the citizenry against the various labor movements that thrived in Chicago (many of which consisted of German-speak-

ing immigrants), and several of the people who had been speaking at the Haymarket gathering were eventually executed, even though they had clearly not thrown the bomb.

"The Haymarket Martyrs" were mourned throughout the world, and May Day became a socialist holiday in their memory. The injustice of this development (several of the anarchists were later pardoned) was matched by the peculiarity of the monument. On its pedestal is carved, "In the name of the people of Illinois, I command PEACE." The accompanying statue of a policeman with his hand raised in forbearance was damaged by a Weathermen bombing attack in the late 1960s, and was ultimately removed to a safer location. Some clever person has since used the enormous pedestal to support a tiny statue of the Virgin Mary. What

remains of the monument can be found on a dead end west of the loop at Randolph and Des Plaines.

Workin' on the Railroad

The Pullman neighborhood, way down south around the intersection of 111th and Cottage Grove, was the setting for one of American labor's great cataclysms, the Pullman Strike of 1894. Pullman manufactured railroad sleeping cars, and what began as a strike against the company's all-powerful control of workers' lives at its South Side works became, through the intervention of Eugene Debs' American Railway Union, a national upheaval. Chicago being the nation's rail hub, trains and commerce were stopped throughout the country. Altgeld, the governor of Illinois, was sympathetic to labor (he was the one who pardoned the surviving Haymarket leaders), and refused to mobilize the state militia against the strikers. But President Cleveland felt no such ambivalence. Under the pretext that the strike was illegal because it was impeding the movement of the U.S. Mail, he sent the army into Chicago, forever souring his reputation with the progressive side of the Democratic party and ensuring the nomination of Bryan in 1896. Debs went to jail, Clarence Darrow defended him, and so on and so forth. Look for the upcoming movie about Pullman in which Schwarzenegger plays a Gatling-gun-brandishing Pinkerton agent.

Before it was integrated into Chicago, Pullman was a self-contained company town, in which workers' expenses and rent were deducted from their paychecks. Naturally, this made things very difficult when hard times came along in the 1890s and they were fired or had their pay reduced. Ironically, the town had originally been intended to be quite humane, avoiding the foulnesses of more traditional factory towns. It was all designed by Solon S. Beman in 1880 in a single, integrated, rather pleasant style—slightly gothic and ornamented, but not too much so. It was segregated by class, with foremen living on different blocks from workers, and, someone whose family lived there told me, by ethnicity as well. Today it is peaceful and quaint, with the town's hotel having been converted into a restaurant and museum. The factory grounds are, naturally, abandoned.

Popular iconography has, of course, long since paved over the strife and radicalism of the 1890s and transformed it into a happy time of boater hats, order, and fanciful architecture. Dissent, then as now, was dysfunctional. The

Populists are supposed to have been braying reactionary louts (absolutely false, by the way, you should question any professor that still buys this silly 1950s line); the strikers were the guilty party in labor disturbances. Nowhere is this more true than at Pullman. The town is best known to the nation as the focal point of the big strike, but this is nowhere mentioned in the little Pullman museum. The only reference to the strike I could find here last time I went (admittedly several years ago) was a plaque and a police club (!) engraved with the legend, "Used in the Pullman Strike, 1894."

Literary Sites: It's Not Just For Reading Anymore

In literary terms, the South Side is the preeminent landscape of socialist realism and its stylistic predecessors. *The Pit*, Frank Norris' best-selling novel, is an intriguing effort to describe naturalistically the city's turn-of-the-century commercial vitality. The great Union Stockyards, of which nothing is left, were, of course, the setting of Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle*. James T. Farrell's trilogy, *Studs Lonigan*, takes place in the neighborhood to the west of Hyde Park. Studs occasionally visits Hyde Park to sneer at the University students, and attends movies at the Michigan theater, whose burnt-out remains can be seen on the North Side of Garfield as you drive to Slam Jams or the Dan Ryan expressway. *Native Son*, written in the same decade and with almost the same aesthetic sensibility, takes place in roughly the same area about twenty years later, in the aftermath of the white flight with which *Studs Lonigan* concludes. The family for which Bigger Thomas works live in one of the formerly grand houses on Drexel Boulevard. Then, of course, there are the Saul Bellow books.

In other towns these places would be cause for a plethora of literary maps and tour guides, but not here, because the South Side officially doesn't exist any more. The Northwest side, though, is the setting of the various Nelson Algren books and stories, which you must read if you haven't already. These are amply celebrated by the various surviving friends of Algren, who meet each year at the Bop Shop on his birthday and from whom literary maps of Wicker Park are available. Simone de Beauvoir also lived here briefly. Important lifestyle note: in *The Man With the Golden Arm*, there is a particularly pretentious bar at Damen and Division into which Frankie Machine will not go. This was probably the Rainbow Club, to this day the city's posier palace. Go here if you feel you must see Urge Overkill in action.

Parks

Jackson Park, which was the site of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, is vast and encompasses "facilities" of every description including a golf course, a bowling green, a Japanese garden, and a harbor for sail boats. There are two grandiosities remaining from that most grandiose of world's fairs, the Museum of Science and Industry and the very large golden statue that originally stood in the middle of the fair's "Grand Basin." This last is particularly striking since it was cleaned a few years ago, and has been known to strike terror into people as they round a curve in the street and behold its stern gilded visage. Look for it south of the Wooded Isle, in the middle of a roundabout that connects Hayes and 63rd in the southern part of the park. Also keep your eyes open for the city's only monument to Clarence Darrow, a disused and absolutely decrepit bridge

just to the south of the museum, that looks as if it's about to cave in. By this logic, one of these days they'll be generously designating the wide spot in the Dan Ryan the "Eugene V. Debs Memorial Accident Investigation Site."

And in case you've been wondering, the 1933 "Century of Progress" exposition, Chicago's other World's Fair, was also held on the South Side, on the land that is now Meigs Field and on the park just to the east of Lake Shore Drive opposite Soldier Field—where the Balbo monument stands, in fact. I believe the Field museum was built for this Art Deco extravaganza, as was Adler Planetarium.

The South Shore Cultural Center, at the intersection of South Shore Drive and 71st



The goddess of the traffic island.

Street, offers some of the more imposing public buildings in the city as well as spectacular lake vistas. I don't know why they call it a "cultural center;" mainly it's a golf course, a beach and a palatial clubhouse. In fact, it used to be called the South Shore Country Club. The property was sold to the city in the early 1970s after all its wealthy members had moved to the suburbs, and I suspect the city came up with a name that employed the same initials so none of the monograms would have to be changed. I'm told by people who play that fantastically bourgeois sport that its golf course is a pretty good one. At any rate, it's certainly scenic, and almost nobody is ever there. Go here for a picnic or just to walk around. The "Center" is situated at the extreme southern tip of Jackson Park, so one can also bicycle there along the path that runs down the east side of Lake Shore Drive, which takes about 30 minutes from the Point. The Chicago Police also keep their horses here, but I don't think private citizens can ride.

The buildings of the cultural center are its main feature. The city has maintained this marble pleasure palace of the 1920s immaculately, with all its gigantic ballrooms and theaters looking like a transplant from Saratoga during prohibition. Why are no U of C events ever held there? Don't ask me. The SSCC is one of the good things about "white flight;" we regular people get to romp about in this luxurious fabulosity while its former owners are now getting their sunburns at some godawful treeless, windowless, loudspeaker-barking, ranch-style "complex" out in suburbia somewhere.

Coming soon: restaurants, barbecue, bars, shopping, entertainment, where to find the free stuff. ■

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BOOKCASES AND STEREO CABINETS

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by Tom Frank

Nobody boasts about "knowing" the South Side. Nobody wants to "know" it. The city of Chicago, ordinarily so ready to brag of its bigness and to compare itself with all other metropolises, seems to actually try to conceal the existence of its enormous southern quadrant. Buy

a tourist map of the city; a guide book to restaurants and places of interest; or look through the Tribune's happy index of what goes on in the city on weekends: the South Side is simply never included. For the kind of people who patronize such culture directories, only the North Side counts: the land of well-heeled office workers skipping blithely from restaurants that mimic foreign cuisine to nightclubs that re-create "old Chicago," collecting accessories, shopping always—and building a "lifestyle."

The South Side is grittier: here people don't have lifestyles, they have *lives*, which are often not too pleasant. They don't have a lot of money, there aren't a lot of familiar things for suburbanites to do, and as a result the South Side (along with the West Side, about which I know nothing, and the East Side, which is under water) has been permanently effaced from the great civic text. In compensation, we get one advantage over the rest of the city: street cred. We're hardened. Scary. But if the sight of working class and poor people doesn't make you quake with fear for your shiny new neon rollerblades and car stereo, you won't have any problems.

The South Side: You Can't Get There From Here

Despite all my ranting above, certain more comprehensive guidebooks (I particularly recommend *Chicago on Foot*, which emphasizes architecture) do cover a handful of South Side neighborhoods. Pilsen, a small community originally built by Czechs and situated just south of the Loop, is the site of a number of interesting buildings and churches. Bridgeport is the home of the Daleys and the White Sox, and also houses a Lithuanian restaurant that you should not miss (Healthy Food, on Halsted north of 33rd Street). Everybody knows about Chinatown. And, naturally, you already know the basic facts about Hyde Park, which is undoubtedly the most peculiar neighborhood in the city (greatest number of bookstores and least number of bars per capita of anywhere, libraries built on the sites of ancient football stadiums, radioactivity, a gigantic Baptist cathedral, Nobel laureates mowing their lawns, shrieking green tropical birds, Leopold and Loeb, etc.)

Unfortunately, part of making the South Side disappear has been the disintegration of its mass transit system, so conventional tourism is problematic (a traditional South Side sport: count how many professors use this word as a noun!). Unless you live by the lake (where the only two upper-middle-class communities on the South Side, Hyde Park and South Shore, are situated) and can ride the Illinois Central commuter train, you will find it almost impossible to commute from the Loop to parts south. It's very difficult to get around without a car, and we don't suggest you try. No El trains go to Hyde Park, and none go far south of 63rd St (although there is a handy new line from the Loop to Midway airport).

This, then, is an attempt to acquaint you with some of the history and landmarks of the South Side which you'll never hear of and can't get to anyway, with an emphasis on the peculiar and the idiosyncratic. We also are generally inclined towards places that are significant to people of a literate, 'progressive' bent.

We have long believed that tourism can be broken down into five categories: stately homes; monuments, historic sites, and battlefields; schools, big churches, and other would-be Gothic piles; scenery and

parks; pubs, restaurants, shops. The South Side has some spectacular specimens from each and—perhaps best of all—almost none of them are ever visited by tourists.

Look Away: A Panoramic View

There are few tall buildings on the South Side, but a tolerable vista unfolds from several of the taller University buildings.

The sixth floor of Harper Library, in particular, affords a marvelous view to the south, from which one can see the great man-made hill down in Calumet City and the Skyway bridge over the Calumet River. These nethermost reaches of the city, abutting Gary and Hammond, are the source of the peculiar acrid effluvium that so frequently inundates our neighborhood.

Grandeur of Ages Past

The South Side is singularly well-endowed with the grandiose former homes of Chicago's wealthy. Kenwood is the specimen closest to Hyde Park, lying north of Hyde Park Boulevard (51st Street) and south of 47th Street. Almost all the houses here are very well-maintained, and many still house the families of pillars of society. Check out in particular the magnificent piles along Woodlawn north of 50th Street: Muhammad Ali lived in the one on the west

at 35th Street or so. Many appear to be very well kept up; but as with almost all the other "sights" discussed here, none of them are open to tourists. The best way to see them is just to drive through. Castles seem to be what the builders were aiming for. Most of the homes are extremely solid-looking structures of large sandstone blocks, built in one of a number of conventional but showy Victorian patterns. I am always struck by the massive Queen Anne turrets and the whimsical, towering conical roofs that adorn the larger homes.

Strangely enough, a forgotten South Side locale called Prairie Avenue was once the absolute pinnacle of Chicago real estate, the residence of the Oprah Winfreys and Coach Ditkas of the 1870s and 80s (only back then they owned industries rather than entertaining people). Today only about five houses remain standing, but these are magnificent, so definitely visit them. A few are apparently still inhabited, one is an art gallery and another is the headquarters of a soccer organization (!). One, the former dwelling of the Marshall Fields, is desolate, with broken windows and plants growing through the roof. Prairie Avenue is the site of Chicago's only surviving building by H. H. Richardson, the preeminent American architect of the 1870s, a solid Italianate structure at the corner of 18th Street. Another, which sits by itself in the middle of a park, is Chicago's oldest surviving house, a classic example of the 'balloon-frame' construction that made the old city so flammable. Somehow this building, dating from 1836, survived the great conflagration.

The Prairie Avenue experience is made

South Side Monuments: Children of a Lesser Fuhrer

Chicago has a considerable number of embarrassing statues and monuments, most of which are located in out-of-the-way places or only visible from moving cars. You may think that a good sense of civic



Remains of an ancient civilization on Prairie Avenue

disgust is required to seek these out, but in fact their oddness makes them truly worth visiting. Perhaps the most embarrassing (and shameful, since it has never been removed) is the Balbo monument in the park on the east side of Lake Shore Drive across from Soldier Field, next to the parking lot for a boating facility. The upper part of the monument, which is all that is visible as you whiz past in your car, is inoffensive enough: a column salvaged from a Roman ruin somewhere in Italy. But stop and get close enough to read the inscription, and you will be truly astonished. The monument commemorates a trans-Atlantic flight by Italo Balbo, Mussolini's air force general, who was largely responsible for the cruel bombing campaign against the defenseless people of Ethiopia in the mid-1930s. The inscription is a classic of fascist bluster:

This column twenty centuries old erected [why are "columns" always "erected"?] on the beach of Ostia the port of Imperial Rome, to watch over the fortunes and victories of the Roman triremes Fascist Italy with the sponsorship of Benito Mussolini presents to Chicago as a symbol and memorial in honor of the Atlantic Squadron led by Balbo which with Roman daring flew across the ocean in the Eleventh Year of the Fascist Era.

The inscription is in both English and Italian. Evidently there was at least some small effort made to render the thing less offensive: the blades of the axes which once accompanied the statue's mandatory fates have been removed. Oh, that Roman Daring!

One of the more evocative (it probably stirred grand passions in upstanding citizens of the nineteenth century) of Chicago's embarrassing monuments is the rather overdone representation of the Fort Dearborn Massacre that is located amidst the ruins of Prairie Avenue, where it is now marvelled at by absolutely nobody. For whatever reason, the soldiers at Fort Dearborn were forced to pack up and leave, and as they and their families departed what would someday be Chicago, they were set upon by Indians and decimated. The monument depicts this racially meaningful moment, with a Bad Indian raising his tomahawk to menace a cowering white woman, while a Good Indian extends his arm policeman-like to prevent any harm coming to the paleface. The Indians look exceedingly fierce, and the word "savage" must have been uppermost in the sculptor's mind.

Far and away the most imposing South Side monument is the Stephen Douglas Memorial, 636 E. 35th Street Douglas was, of course, Lincoln's rival for both the Senate (Douglas won) and later the Presidency. Both elections were considered referendums on slavery, and Douglas was the champion of compromise (some might say appeasement) with the South. He wrote the

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You Are My South Side, My Only South Side A SIGHTSEER'S GUIDE TO THE CHICAGO NOBODY KNOWS

side of the street with the tall iron fence and fountain; he apparently also used to dine at University Gardens on 53rd Street The enigmatic yellow stone buildings on the northeast corner of Woodlawn and 49th were built by Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam, and are said to be inhabited today by Louis Farrakhan when he's in town. Longtime Kenwood residents claim, although I have my doubts, that Elijah Muhammad kept lions on the grounds.

There are a number of famous homes in Kenwood; you can look up the best-known ones in a good Chicago architectural guide. But the neighborhood is well worth a walk and a gaw even without a guide, especially along Greenwood and Ellis between 51st and 48th. There are two Frank Lloyd Wright buildings here: one is obvious and striking on the west side of Woodlawn between 52nd and Hyde Park Boulevard; the other is a remarkable garage on 49th Street, just west of Kenwood, across from the park. Both were executed before the Great One had fully developed his prairie style; in fact, the building on 49th Street, in which his future tendencies are obvious, is rumored to be a later addition to the pretty but rather run-of-the-mill yellow Victorian house with classical references that stands on the corner of 49th and Kenwood. Also check out *Plutoschloss*, the great 1887 mansion at 48th and Kimbark that houses the operations of *The Baffler* magazine. F. Scott Fitzgerald tied one on here! Continuing north from 51st Street is Drexel Boulevard, which is lined for a few blocks with what used to be some of the finest houses and apartments in the city—some are still pretty fine. The headquarters of Operation Push are here.

Martin Luther King Drive was once called Grand Boulevard, and grand it is. The former showplace of the city's wealthy elite, it stretches from a statue of George Washington at 51st Street to another of a World War I soldier just south of the shopping center

much eerier by the city's peculiar efforts to humanize what is, basically, a wasteland. The street is lined unconvincingly with cobblestone gutters, Victorian lamps and wrought-iron fences. Only the houses and the rich folks who built them are missing.



Ouch! Above, a petrified infant begs mutely for rescue.

so in their place the city has erected in front of each vacant lot an elaborate weather-proof sign, complete with photographs and architectural drawings, depicting what the structure that used to stand there looked like, who lived in it, and how they got so rich. They never say when the buildings were torn down, or give the wealthy ones' present addresses in Lake Forest.

Prairie Avenue lies in the shadow of the great Donnelly printing works, just west of McCormick place. Take Lake Shore Drive to Cermak and then follow the signs.